

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

No. 77.—VOL. III.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 29, 1864.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[DONNA XIMENA LEAVES REDGRAVE.]

THE WARNING VOICE.

By the Author of "Mrs. Larkall's Boarding School," "Man and his Idol," &c.

CHAPTER XII.

DEFEATED.

In vain the spider's web you tear,
To-morrow all is mended there;
And what was incomplete to-day,
Will ruthlessly enmesh the prey. Logan.

It was a daring step on the part of Donna Ximena to accept so readily the suggestion that she should accompany the Ingarstones to the condemned cell. She knew this when she took it, but she knew also that it was the only course now open to her.

And do not suppose that this conclusion was forced upon her at the moment. She had arrived at it long before. True, she had not anticipated the finding of the silver-cross and what followed; but she had been prepared for an outburst in some form. She had felt her position growing more and more critical up to that moment, and she had said to herself: "If I am driven to extremities, there is but one thing to be done. I must brazen it out. That is my only chance."

No conclusion could have been more just.

It was the only chance left her.

The well assumed indignation of an innocent woman, coupled with the cheerful willingness to submit to the proposed ordeal, was not without its immediate effect; Ingarstone was palpably alarmed; Cecil was nervous; Redgrave was half-incredulous, half-indignant.

Before either could give expression to their feelings in words, the haughty woman improved the impression she had thus far made, by judiciously closing the avenue to discussion.

"The carriage starts for the goal in an hour, I believe?" she asked, addressing Lord Ingarstone.

"In an hour," he faltered.

"During that time, I will, with your permission, retire to my apartments," said the lady.

Cecil was about to speak.

"Oh, you need not be alarmed," she added, turning

upon him, and speaking with slight acidity. "I shall neither run away nor destroy myself. When you are ready, I shall be."

She bowed and left them.

With what feelings she retired to her suite of rooms may be gathered from the review which she there took of the exact position in which she stood.

There was a mirror stretched from ceiling to floor at either end of her private sitting-room. One mirror reflected the other; both reflected her tall, full-proportioned and majestic figure, as during the hour of grace she swept to and fro between them—approaching once, gazing into it vacantly, then turning and advancing to the other, and so on incessantly.

During the greater part of this time she spoke to herself in a low, half-articulate murmur.

"Is this the crisis?" she asked herself, "or does it only seem so? Shall I tide over this rock or split upon it? Let me see. Let me think. My coming to this place was a mistake. Some horrible fascination dragged me here. I wanted to see the great error of my life blotted out. I wanted to hear the sentence of death pronounced on that poor fool with my own ears. I wanted to see him expiate the crime with my own eyes. It seemed as if then, and then only, I should feel safe. It was a weakness, and has yielded a crop of evils. This seems the worst of them; but is it? Have I got to the point of desperation? Let me see. Let me think."

She clasped her fingers across her brow, and struggled hard to take in at a glance every possible bearing of the position in which she stood.

"From first to last," she resumed, "difficulties have beset my path. It seemed an easy thing to meet Redgrave with rank for rank, and pride for pride, and go to lure him on to his degradation. But what obstacles have started up in my path! His friendship with Cecil Ingarstone was my first discovery, and my first shock. That threatened to undo everything; that would have proved fatal to my project, but for the accident of my possessing information which made even the proud peer subservient to the despised outcast."

Her eyes glittered and her cheeks crimsoned, so in-

tense was the satisfaction which her proud heart derived from this reflection.

"That peril overcome," she muttered, "and, suddenly, another starts up in my path. Was it chance or was it fate that brought the tribe back to this spot the moment I had set foot here? Was it accident or was it destiny that brought the gipsy queen's life to a close under the shadow of Ingarstone? I left them in Spain: why could she not have perished there, she of all others who held my life in her withered hand? Two words from her lips, and all would have been over. Thank God, those words were never spoken! I was here in time to frustrate that, and to save myself once more."

At the bare thought of the narrow escape, beads of cold perspiration came out on the woman's brow. The recollection of danger is often more startling than the sense of the peril at the moment; and it was so in this case.

"That seemed the crisis," Ximena reflected; "but it was not. I felt myself safe at last. I was deceived. How could I calculate on the reappearance of this miserable woman, Leeson—the despised playfellow of my childhood—at Ingarstone, and at this time? How could I suppose, for a moment, that her eyes were upon me as I wandered among the ferns last night? Weak fools would say the hand of Providence was in it all. It looks like it. But it is not. No. 'Tis chance, mere chance. I must believe that. If I didn't, if I saw in it the hand of fate, I should give in, and yield myself up to shame and infamy. That I will never do of my own act. Never, never!"

She spoke aloud.

The sound of her own voice startled her, and she relapsed into silence.

Still she continued the chain of thought in her mind.

"What are the dangers of my position at this moment?" she asked herself. "The Ingarstones suddenly throw off their friendship, and defy me. They must have a motive for that, and a strong one. What does it consist in? Surely in their impression that I stand in a position of such peril that I am powerless. And in this they are right, though they

do not know it. This sudden flight of Darn Crook leaves me friendless. I cannot give him the signal agreed on between us. I cannot appeal to him for money or advice. To think that the blow should have come at this moment!

She looked around her aghast.
"At this moment of all others!" she exclaimed aloud.

An unwanted sense of helplessness seemed to steal over her at the thought. But in a second or two her strong nature shook it off.

"Pshaw! I am never lost while I have my self-reliance. I have begun, and I must go through. Must, I say; I must do it."

So perfect was the control which this woman's will had over her that, as she uttered these words with fervid emphasis, she became herself again,—firm, self-possessed, apparently invincible.

Drawing her diamond-studded watch from her side, she found that there was half-an-hour to spare before the time at which the party started for the gaol.

"I will write to Flacker," she said, quietly.

She took out her travelling writing-desk, superbly mounted in mother-of-pearl, and opening it, selected half a quire of note paper, cream-tinted, thick as board, and impressed with a crest borrowed from the arms of Cordova, which she claimed as belonging to her of right—a claim which had not the least foundation in fact.

Upon a sheet of this she wrote as follows:

"DEAR SIR,—Events are taking a serious turn.

"Hitherto I have been able to keep the Ingarstones at bay. In spite of their knowledge of my antecedents, they have been terrified into silence, and have permitted me to act as I pleased in the matter of Mr. Ormond Redgrave, though I have reason to believe that the suspicions of the latter have been aroused.

"Unfortunately a new element has now suddenly thrust itself into their case.

"Circumstances have transpired which present me to their astonished gaze, not only in the light of an adventurer angling for the hand of their friend—that they could have borne; their philosophy was equal to that—but they are staggered and dumbfounded at certain revelations which seem to connect me with the murder of Ingarstone's eldest daughter; Lydia, I think they call her.

"Of course I am innocent.

"Still, circumstances give a sort of colour to the idea that I am the woman mentioned by young Holt in his trumped-up story to the jury.

"That is a net I shall easily break through.

"The worst of it is that though I prove my innocence, and see Holt executed for the murder (which sight I shall witness personally, and with the utmost satisfaction), disclosure will be made which must frustrate my matrimonial designs. In a word, Redgrave must know my story. By the burning and tingling of my ears, I conclude that he is probably learning it at this moment. He will ascertain my gipsy origin. I shall not be able to persuade him that my rank in my own country is not affected by my early poverty in this land. No representations as to my being a stolen infant or anything of that kind will weigh with him. He will be horribly indignant, and desperately angry, and there will be an end of my influence over him.

"But he must not therefore escape.

"Had I succeeded, I should at once have satisfied my personal ambition, so far as wealth and station is concerned, and have gratified my revenge by the perpetual contemplation of his impotent writhings.

"This was not to be.

"The stake was too high, the play too desperate. I am right proud of the attempt, but it has failed.

"Now then for the next step.

"I see by the papers that my father, Darn Crook, has disappeared. It would be possible for me to find his address. An advertisement in the *Times*, signed with the pass-word 'Zezede,' would unearth him; but it would be to little purpose. He is not fond of people who fail; and in place of aid and money, I should meet with nothing but violence and abuse. I prefer, therefore, trusting to you—at least for the present.

"From the time of my leaving here I must be invisible.

"I must act through you—my agent.

"It is, therefore, necessary that we should meet, and that speedily. I have my plans laid, and am prepared for action. As I have always contemplated the possibility of my desperate venture breaking down, so I have prepared for the contingency. What my plans are, I won't now explain. I will only say that I rely greatly on the co-operation of Andrew Nolan, the prisoner discharged at the late assizes.

"You can, perhaps, trace him out for me?

"I shall be in town on Wednesday. Call at 3.30. We can then discuss matters.—Yours, very faithfully,

"XIMENA."

"P.S.—Where is he? And how is he? Bring me word when you come. These Ingarstones have not behaved too well to me; and should he recover, let them look to it."

This calm, business-like letter the lady placed in an envelope, and carefully sealed.

She dropped it into the post-box at the foot of the stairs as she went down, while the turret-clock was striking the hour to accompany her host and the rest to the county gaol.

The carriage had just driven up to the door.

Ingarstone, evidently nervous and fidgety, had come out, and was standing on the steps, drawing on a pair of buckskin gloves, which accorded well with the rest of his costume—his white hat, his stiff light cravat, buff waistcoat, blue coat, and grey trousers, all smart and prim, and all of the Regency cut.

Cecil and Redgrave, both greatly agitated, were talking in the hall to a little man, with a broad florid face, and dangerously high-heeled boots, who was straining up to them as he talked in a hopeless endeavour to overcome the difference between their height and his.

As Donna Ximena approached, Redgrave, stifling a sigh, mechanically lifted his hat.

"Mr. Roach," he said, introducing the little man.

The lady acknowledged the introduction.

"Lord Ingarstone's legal adviser," added Redgrave, by way of explanation.

"Flattered, I'm sure," said the donna.

Having decided in her own mind, and with no little resentment, that the lawyer had been sent for to act as a spy upon her, she looked down at him as she would have done at some noxious reptile, and swept on to the carriage.

Ingarstone handed her in.

"You will excuse the addition to our party," he said, apologetically. "Old friend, deceased old friend of mine. Order for admission fortunately left blank—self and party."

"An open order?"

"Yes."

"It would have included a police officer?"

"My dear madam!"

"Oh, I should have felt the insult less," she replied, bitterly, pointing to the lawyer as she spoke; "and he would have known his duty better."

She let down her veil, and the carriage drove off.

CHAPTER XLII.

IN THE CONDEMNED CELL.

Countess.—Dost thou know thou speak'st to me?
Huron.—'Tis therefore so I speak. Love.

In the solitude of the condemned cell, Radical Holt looked his doom firmly and steadily in the face.

The time fixed for his execution was drawing so close now that he could count the hours upon his fingers. And how swiftly they passed! The life of a prisoner is a weary one; its monotony is torture. The long days are only matched in their slow progress by the interminable nights. But the inmate of the condemned cell is in a different position, and his feelings are different to those of all other prisoners. To others time brings liberty, or the chance of it—to the condemned it can bring only a darker fate. The way from the cell is through the grave; and such is the tenacity with which men cling to life, that the condemned regard with horror the flying hours that rush so swiftly, so mercilessly away.

The cell was as comfortable as such places ever are. Prison authorities deal tenderly with the condemned. They give the poor wretch of their best, in lodging, food, and bodily comforts. But the best in such cases is bad enough, and this cell which Holt occupied was close and dark, and ill-furnished, resembling a loose-box for some animal, rather than a living-place for a human being.

It was lit by a square barred window, and on this particular morning a stream of light poured in on the shock head of the prisoner, who sat on his bed under the window, and, supporting his head with both hands, was trying to read a bible, open on his knees.

He made an honest effort to read it.

At first he had argued with the chaplain who brought it to him, and refused it. The guilty, he said, had need of it: he was innocent, and had none. He would not even compromise himself by looking into it. Only when he was assured that innocence itself might find comfort in those sacred pages did he consent to consult them.

Now that the fatal hour was drawing close, he felt that his chief hope lay in that direction. Like Eugene Aram, "for the good of his soul he read that book," and strove hard to bring all his thoughts into subjection while he did so. It was, he found, however, hard, very hard to do this. Buoyed up by a sense of his own innocence, he could not resign himself altogether to his fate. It seemed to him that help must come, that something must happen, that there must

be some way of escape, though it might not open till the eleventh hour.

Thus impressed, his mind perpetually wandered from the page on which his eyes were fixed.

He thought of his dead mother, and strove to forgive her the wrong she had done him. He thought of Janet; and shed many a bitter tear over her memory. The boyish face of his brother Curly glimmered through his tears, and he felt his heart drawn toward the lad as it had never been before. Even his father—stern, rigid, but just—absolutely just according to his harsh notions—awoke in him feelings for which he could hardly account.

And above and beyond all this, there was the one central and absorbing thought and conviction that something must happen to secure his reprieve.

It was with some vague hope of furthering this end that he had so earnestly prayed for an interview with Lord Ingarstone.

He thought, if he could speak to him face to face, that he could impress him with a belief in the truth of his story.

And this morning his lordship was to come, by his own appointment.

The shooting of the bolts of the iron-door of the cell caused Holt to look up sharply, and to throw away the book.

The gaoler entered. Ingarstone followed. Then the door was closed.

Holt rose and bowed respectfully.

"Ah! well, my lord," said his lordship. "Well treated—eh? Well fed?"

"I have nothing to complain of, my lord," the prisoner answered. "They're all kind, and I feel it very good of your lordship to come here."

"No! 'pon my word—no!" was the hurried reply.

"To come here at my wish," the prisoner continued, "to hear what I've got to say. My lord, it's very little. It's what I've said before in the court, and what I've told the chaplain; but I couldn't rest till I'd told you. I never did it, my lord. I never broke into Ingarstone, and I never laid a finger on your lady daughter. I didn't, my lord; indeed I didn't. There's no use of my lying now; and it won't do me good, or hurt me, one way or the other; but I must say it. I'm innocent, my lord. I don't ask you to move hand or foot to save me; but it's the lips of a dying man as swear to you that, as there's a heaven above me, my lord, I'm innocent!"

It was in vain that Ingarstone tried to stop this outburst.

As soon as Holt had ceased, he spoke.

"A week ago, Holt," he said, "I should have smiled at you. Things have altered since then, and I come here prepared to listen to all that you have to say."

"Things have altered?" cried Holt, catching at a faint hope.

"Yes."

"They have made some discovery?"

"Not so fast—not so fast!" cried his lordship.

"Don't question, only answer me. Let me first carry your recollection back to the statement you made in court—your defence, in fact. One portion of it, if I remember rightly, referred to your meeting with a singular woman."

"She was in court, my lord," burst in the prisoner.

"In court?"

"Yes. I saw her. I pointed to her. I told them she was there, but they wouldn't listen to me. They would drag me from the dock; they would do it, my lord."

"They were right. Even if you were not mistaken, they were still right."

"Mistaken!" cried Holt, incredulously.

"You think that impossible?"

"I am certain of it."

"Reflect. You have seen this woman (if it is the same) thrice, and thrice only in your whole lifetime. Is it not so?"

"It is."

"On each occasion for a short time, for a few minutes only?"

"Yes, my lord, but—"

"On each occasion there was something to impress the face you saw upon your memory. Take it so; but, on the other hand, there was a long interval of time between the first glimpse of the woman's face and the second; longer still between that and the third. Eh? Isn't it so?"

"Oh, my lord, I cannot be mistaken!" exclaimed the prisoner.

"Let us see," resumed his lordship, "the woman who passed under the trees in the red sunset—what was her rank in life? what did her appearance denote?"

"Poverty, my lord; she was in rags."

"And the woman at the gaming-house, was she in rags also?"

"No. She was richly dressed."

"Gad! a discrepancy at starting! and the lady in court, she also was richly attired?"

"Yes."

"I thought so. Now, Holt, which is most likely, that you should be deceived as to the identity of the first and second face, or that the ragged fugitive and the richly attired gamester should be two distinct persons? I will put the same question as to what I will call the first woman and the third woman; and if you like, also as to the second and third woman? Their identity is improbable in the last degree. Can you swear so positively that your certainty overcomes in your own mind all the improbabilities of the case?"

"It would do so, my lord, were they fifty times as great."

His lordship cast a searching glance into the prisoner's face.

"This is a most serious case," he said.

"It is for me, my lord."

"Yes, yes! no doubt," replied his lordship, who had not taken that view of the matter. "It is, therefore imperative that you should be most cautious, most emphatic."

"I have no doubts, my lord," said Holt; "only let me be confronted with the woman I saw in court."

Ingarstone smiled, and shook his head.

"There is one objection to that course, my young friend," he said. "I have a longer head than yours—no offence, we had long heads in the Regency days—and I see that you have everything to gain and nothing to lose. Your object is to shift your burden to somebody else's shoulders, no matter whose. Not pleasant for somebody else, eh?"

Holt flushed scarlet.

"I am a convicted criminal, my lord; my word goes for nothing," he replied.

"True. Vastly clever, too. Gad, yes," said Ingarstone.

"My oath goes for nothing, neither," resumed the prisoner; "I'm nothing better than a dead man in the eyes of the law. So, what I say can hurt nobody; but it may go to this, it may serve to show you, my lord, that your old servant's son wasn't the scoundrel to lay violent hands on your daughter. And it may help you to say to father some day, 'I doubt whether he did it, Holt,' and so make him think less hard of his son, dead and gone."

His lordship reflected.

Had he a right to do what the condemned criminal asked of him?

Was he justified in putting Donna Ximena to that trial?

True, she had herself offered to submit to it in support of her innocence as against the dreadful allegation which had been brought against her. But, clearly no good could come of it. Holt's evidence was, as he had himself admitted, useless. And should he persist in his assertion—perhaps the result of delusion—would it not plant a thorn in her woman's breast which might rankle there while life itself lasted?

Fortunately, at this juncture, Roach, the diminutive lawyer, entered the cell.

Something appeared to have happened, for he was bursting with importance: his grey eyes were full out of his head; his apologetic face seemed swelling by reason of his tight cravat; and he struggled an extra inch up towards his employer's face.

Ingarstone bent down and explained his difficulties.

"It must be, my lord," said Roach, with decision.

"But the lady—"

"The lady insists on it."

"She is determined, for her own sake?"

"Quite."

"There is an end of my responsibility, then," said his lordship, shrugging his shoulders. "Holt, it shall be as you wish. But one word of caution. Don't add to your crime by a careless or vindictive word. The lady, Roach."

There was a brief moment of suspense.

Then Roach, who had bustled out of the cell, bustled into it again, conducting Lord Cecil and Ormond Redgrave.

"The lady?" asked Ingarstone, impatiently.

"Here, my lord," said Roach.

There was a rustling of silk; and then a tall figure swept into the cell, half filling it with ample skirts, and leaving but little space for the six persons already present—the prisoner, the gaoler, Ingarstone, his son, Redgrave, and Roach.

"My lord," said the latter, straining up at his employer, "you will perhaps permit me to conduct this ceremony, if I may call it so?"

Ingarstone bowed assent.

"Very good," said Roach. "Now, prisoner, you will please to understand that the statement you made on your trial, and the loud assertions in which you indulged at its close, have produced a painful sensation in the breast of a lady of distinction, who was unfortunately present in court. Rightly or wrongly,

she feels that your remarks were directed against her; and I need hardly say that, if so, they constituted a grievous aspersion on her character and fair fame. Now, as she cannot regard you as so depraved as to desire to inflict a wilful injury upon her, she has availed herself of Lord Ingarstone's kindness to accompany him here to-day. She is present. She will raise her veil, and you will then, I trust, have the manliness to own that you have been mistaken. Now, madam, if you please."

The lady stepped forward.

She confronted the prisoner at a few paces' distance. Up to this moment, the face had been hidden by the veil, glistening and glimmering with bugles, which Donna Ximena had worn in court.

Now, at the instance of Roach, it was raised.

Without a moment's hesitation, Holt clasped his hands, and drew back a step.

"It is she!" he said.

"You are sure?" demanded the lawyer.

"Certain. I cannot be mistaken."

As he spoke, he surveyed the face presented to him with intense scrutiny.

"Think again," said the puffy little man. "Take your time. This was the woman you saw under the trees? This was the woman you saw at the gaming-house?"

"Oh, yes, yes; I am sure of it."

"Are you, sir?" cried Roach, turning even more purple in the face.

"Quite sure."

"Then, sir, I'm sorry to say I wouldn't give that"—and he snapped his podgy fingers—"for your word, or your oath either, sir."

The prisoner was all amazement.

"But I can swear—" he began.

"No doubt, you can swear anything. You would swear, I daresay, that this was the lady you dared to point your finger at in court?"

"It is the same," replied Holt.

Ingarstone stepped forward, and for the first time caught sight of the woman's face.

"Why—this isn't Donna Ximena?"

"No," said Roach, with a self-satisfied smirk; "and you see this rascal was prepared to assert that it was, and that he saw her in court as well as on two previous occasions. Was there ever a more monstrous impostor?"

"But I don't understand," said Ingarstone. "Who is this person?"

"What matters, my lord? She is *not* your guest," replied Roach.

"But vastly like, 'pon honour!'"

"Like!" shouted the exasperated little man. "Yes, she is like. There may be fifty like! But what right has a man to make an assertion blasting a woman's character for life upon a mere likeness? But for a mere accident this fellow would have cast an indelible stigma on the fair fame of a lady, whom it is right to suppose he never saw in his life before she confronted him in court. Happily, we have been able to lay a trap for this fellow, and he has fallen into it. His own cunning has defeated him, and he has not only forfeited all claim to your commiseration, but has confirmed the justice of the sentence passed upon him. Come, my lord—come, gentleman—enough of this farce."

And he moved toward the door.

The prisoner's head sank on his breast; he groaned deeply, and sank back on his couch.

Ormond Redgrave—who had listened to what had passed with painful attention—suddenly addressed him.

"One word, Holt," he said; "how do you explain this?"

"I can't believe my eyes," he said, without looking up.

"You still think this woman gave you the bracelet?"

"I could swear it."

"And the missing diamond? Do you yet account for its being found on you?"

"No."

"You offer no explanation?"

"None. I can't explain it to myself."

Redgrave shook his head incredulously.

"Till you do that," he said; "you can't expect a single human being to credit your story."

With these words the whole party quitted the cell, and as the iron door clanged to upon him once more, Tim Holt felt that it was all over with him. One last chance of making good his story had been given him. He had lost it. There was nothing before him now but the scaffold.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE HOUR OF FLIGHT.

Her haughty spirit works in her again,

Towering, alas! as ne'er it did before,

Sheridan Knowles.

The singular scene in the condemned cell had been

brought about entirely by one of those fortunate accidents which Donna Ximena was so clever in seizing upon, and turning to her own advantage.

On starting for the gaol, it had been her intention boldly to confront Holt in his cell, and to meet his recognition with a proud front and scornful bearing.

Why not?

It might try her nerve, but no harm could come of it.

What if the Ingarstones had awoke to a suspicion that the Lady Lydia had perished by her hand? And what if this interview tended to confirm it? She cared not. It was too late for suspicion to hurt her now. No amount of suspicion could undo Tim Holt's trial—or revoke his sentence—or stay his execution.

Nothing but proof—positive proof could do that, and until that was done she was safe.

"Holt's death is my life."

That was her theory, and (since the Ingarstones had betrayed her secret to Redgrave) she was reckless of everything, so confident was she that the death of Holt was inevitable.

In this state of mind she had reached the gaol.

The carriage party were expected, and were received by the governor, who, out of consideration to Lord Ingarstone, conducted them to his own drawing-room. There some little time was spent in conversation, chiefly in respect to the late trial and the conduct of the prisoner; after which Lord Ingarstone (after consultation with Roach) expressed his desire to visit the condemned cell in the first place alone, leaving the rest of his party to follow.

When his lordship had left, the governor suggested that it might be agreeable to the visitors to inspect the rest of the building. It was agreeable, and he took on himself the duty of accompanying them. As a gallant man, and a man of taste, it was very natural that the governor should attach himself to the donna; and as she did not feel altogether at ease in the company of any one member of her party, she was glad to avail herself of his attentions.

As usual in such cases, the lady was charming.

The governor, fascinated by her beauty and manners, almost forgot the rest of the party after awhile, and thus it happened that they passed through one section of the building alone. In this section there were one or two cells of no particular attraction, the inmates of which the governor just indicated with his keys, without unlocking the doors.

"Gipsies," he said, casually.

Ximena was instantly interested.

"What is their offence?" she asked.

"Poaching chiefly. A lad for firing brushwood, I think; a woman for fortune-telling. All common offences."

"Indeed! The woman, is she—you will smile at me—young and beautiful?"

"Neither, I fancy. Let me see,"—he referred to a pocket-book which he drew from his breast—"I have her name here. 'Miriam Lee, 29, married woman, fortune-telling! There you have her history, so far as I know it.'"

Ximena was silent.

A sudden idea had taken possession of her brain, flashing through it with the speed of lightning.

"I know something of that woman," she said at length.

"You?"

The governor was astonished.

"Yes. She once told my fortune—I'm afraid it was very wicked," she added, archly—"and her predictions were verified, or partly verified, in a remarkable manner. I would give anything to speak to her."

"You can enjoy the luxury for nothing," said the gallant governor.

"Not here. Oh, not here," cried Ximena, with a shudder.

"My private office is at your service."

It was a great stretch of privilege; but the governor was such a gallant man, so devoted to the ladies, and so bewildered by the play of the lady's lustrous dark eyes, that he could refuse her nothing.

Ximena instantly accepted the offer, and soon after joined her friends, who had come round by another corridor.

It is needless to state in detail what followed. The reader is already aware of the striking resemblance—not without a cause, by the way—between the gipsy Miriam and Donna Ximena. It had struck Beatrice Ingarstone on her visit to the gipsies' camp. It was of this resemblance that Ximena now availed herself. She first explained her intention to Cecil Ingarstone, Redgrave, and Roach—the latter of whom she had found it to her interest to conciliate; and having satisfied them that most important results turned upon the use she could make of the gipsy, by letting her confront Holt in her place, she, without difficulty, induced Miriam to assume her rich dress for a few minutes, and to act the part we have seen her play.

It was, therefore, Miriam Lee that Holt identified as

being the person he had thrice met—the last time in court during his trial.

The governor was ignorant of what was passing. He believed that Ximena was all the time closeted with the gipsy in his private office. It was unnecessary to deceive him, and the more so as the consequences of the ruse had been just what the artful woman anticipated.

Holt had defeated himself.

His position, therefore, remained the same.

Ximena alone had cause for triumph; and the glow of satisfaction which lit up her beautiful face, and sparkled in her dangerous eyes, as she bade the governor an impressive farewell, showed how precious that triumph was to her. The glow of it irradiated her features until they reached the house. Redgrave, looking at her, thought she had never appeared so beautiful, and the strong feeling of admiration which recent events had done so much to repress burned with renewed intensity.

"She has been wronged," he said to himself; "unintentionally these Ingarstones have done her a cruel injustice. Her accidental resemblance to that low woman, that gipsy prisoner, has misled them, and she is the victim of their injustice and suspicion."

His breast flamed with indignation at the thought.

The sympathies are readily excited when youth and beauty are the objects of them; and the donna was still young, while her voluptuous style of beauty had hardly attained its full development.

Burning to repair the wrong he had done her, Redgrave followed the donna from the carriage, and they turned into what was known as the Western garden.

"Ximena," he exclaimed, "we have been cruel and unjust to you. I, especially, have been so. I don't hesitate to confess it; and I seize the first opportunity to ask your forgiveness."

She turned and confronted him with a searching gaze.

"Tell me," she said, "what do you know? what have these people told you?"

"What matters?" asked Redgrave, tenderly. "They have been deceived. They have discovered their error. You have convinced them that their suspicions were utterly groundless. Surely that is enough."

"You have not answered me," was her quiet reply. "My absence this morning was doubtless improved to my advantage. You had my biography poured into your ears; did you not?"

"Something was said—I scarce know what. The village gossip has their own surmises as to your past history—a wild story which I refused to credit, and which is now utterly refuted. 'Tis clear that your resemblance to some low person has given rise to all the scandal that has arisen. Why should we trouble ourselves further about the matter?"

The lady looked at him for a few moments, with irresolution depicted in her face.

How should she act?

The temptation to avail herself of this unexpected renewal of confidence was very great. Redgrave had proposed; with a little tact, he might be brought to follow up his proposal with a hasty marriage, and then all would be safe. That was the bright side of the question—the sun shone on that. But there was a dark side also, over which the clouds lowered heavily, and the storm was ready to break. The Ingarstones had gone too far to draw back. They knew her well enough, and now that they had plucked up courage to take the first step, they would not rest—she felt sure of that—until they had thoroughly exposed and unmasked her. And exposure of her designs on Redgrave was not the worst of it. Everything conspired to implicate her in the crime which had cast a funeral gloom over the house of Ingarstone, and in that direction there was absolute danger.

Reputation and personal safety therefore alike demanded that she should abandon her position, and retreat as speedily as possible.

This conviction prompted her answer to Redgrave's last question.

"You are a proud man, Redgrave," she said, in her haughtiest manner; "proud of your birth, your station, and all the advantages which heaven has given you."

Redgrave looked amazed.

"It is true," he replied. "I cannot deny it. But—"

"But," she interrupted, "your pride can teach no lesson to mine. It is not more sensitive or exacting. It cannot more readily suffer a reflection, or brook an insult. Whatever you claim in right of your pedigree or your wealth, be sure I hold myself equally entitled to."

"I scarcely understand you," said Redgrave.

"No? Yet your feelings should interpret mine. Your fine sense of honour should tell you that I bitterly resent the indignity I have suffered in this house. These Ingarstones have done me a wrong which I can never forget or forgive. In that wrong

you have participated. Yes, I take your apology for what it is worth; but in offering it, you convict yourself. What line of conduct had I a right to expect from you? From the moment that you entreated me to place my future in your hands, did it not become your duty to guard my honour and my fair fame as jealously as your own? Was it not your duty to stifle the faintest breath of slander, and to hold me, like Caesar's wife, beyond suspicion? Was I wrong in expecting so much? Am I wrong now in saying that this expectation has been cruelly defeated? I came to this place on the invitation of your friends; at your own solicitation I placed my honour in your keeping; and under this roof, and in your presence, I have been insulted as no woman would suffer herself to be insulted a second time."

"But, Ximena," pleaded Redgrave, "do but consider—"

"To what purpose?" she retorted, sharply. "What is done cannot be reversed. The insult offered me, the suspicion and indignity heaped on my head, is not to be removed. I have been stigmatized as an impostor. I have been charged—on the evidence of a wandering lunatic—as an accomplice, or principal—heaven knows which!—in an atrocious crime. This has happened to me—to the woman you have asked to share your future, and in your presence and with your concurrence. In your presence, too, I have had to degrade myself by taking advantage of an accident—the merest accident in the world—to prove my innocence and the trumpery nature of the charge against me. After that blow to my pride—to my self-respect, I may say—one course alone is open to me. From this moment everything between us is at an end—"

"Surely not. You cannot be so cruel!" exclaimed Redgrave.

"Yes, thus cruel to my own heart. Honour is more to me than happiness, Redgrave; and my honour demands that we should part."

"But you will let me speak?"

"To what end?" she demanded. "The wrong is done."

"You are so hard, so exacting!" exclaimed Redgrave, "you will hear no plea, you will make no allowance. You urge the blow your pride has suffered; but had mine no right to put itself on the defensive, when I saw the woman I had chosen, assailed by ominous looks, by meaning whispers and open accusations? Ximena, I stole my heart to doubt, and wrestled with suspicion from the first hour we met. I have preserved a perfect faith in you—a faith that, assailed on all sides, has never wavered, never yielded. If at the last I faltered, stunned and overwhelmed at the magnitude of the charge against you, it was the act of a man—and I am only human."

Ximena's lip curled with a smile of contempt.

"Enough," she said. "We waste time."

"But you do not mean it? You cannot mean it?" the lover pleaded. "This insult to your pride was none of my planning. I have been true to you from first to last. In spite of whispered slanders and open accusations, I am ready to make you mine."

"To make—me—yours?"

She repeated his words, pausing cruelly between each of them.

"To make me yours! Great heavens! am I come to this? Am I fallen so low that I must hear such words? You'll take me, will you? Thank you, sir. You'll condescend to have me, in spite of slanderous tongues and false accusations—liars—miscreants? I'm deeply grateful. I'm your humble servant. I'm—Go, sir, you have insulted me."

"Heaven knows, without intention!"

"Pshaw!" said the donna, with feigned asperity; "I can't look to intentions: words are enough for me. I have said—we part. That determination nothing can alter. Prayers, entreaties, insults are alike useless; we part."

She caught up her sweeping robes, and turned to go.

Redgrave looked at her with an incredulous gaze.

Her beauty in that moment was so supreme, so overwhelming, that he stood like one entranced. When he could speak, he burst out into one loud, passionate exclamation.

"Ximena!" he cried, "hear me! forgive me! pity me! Merciful heaven! You have never loved me!"

In his excess of feeling, he sunk upon one knee, and held out his clasped hands entreatingly.

She knew it, but did not turn her head.

She heard his words, gloating and glorying over every one of them; but no movement of the head, no fold of the sweeping dress, no falter in the onward stride betrayed that she did so.

To his entreaties she seemed deaf; to the action that accompanied it she was indifferent.

Moved by one set purpose, she passed on into the house, and thence to a vehicle which awaited her, and bore her straight from Ingarstone.

The judgment which took her thence was not at fault.

Within an hour after she had quitted the stately domain, a horseman, booted and spurred, drove up to the main entrance, and alighting, asked eagerly for Lord Ingarstone.

He was informed that his lordship was in the library.

"Take me to him," said the man, whose manner was rough and imperious. "And hark, you, there is a lady staying here."

"A Spanish lady?"

"Well—yes."

"She is gone."

"Gone!"

The rough man rapped out a big oath; and from the expression of his face and the manner in which he stamped his feet, the servants considered that it was just as well for the Spanish lady that she had not delayed her departure.

(To be continued.)

The following is the number of persons which the largest churches in Europe will contain:—St. Peter's, Rome, 54,000; cathedral at Milan, 37,000; St. Paul's, at London, 25,000; St. Sophia, at Constantinople, 23,000; Notre Dame de Paris, 21,000; cathedral of Pisa, 13,000; St. Mark, of Venice, 7,000.

The following statistics show the disturbed state of the different nations at present:—There is war in Poland, war in Algeria, war in Tunis, war in Mexico, war in the United States, war in Peru, war in New Zealand, war in China and Kachgar, war in Japan, war in Afghanistan, and war in twenty countries in Africa.

A CURIOUS piece of the old Roman road has been laid bare at Malton, about three feet below the present level. It consists of paving-stones run together with mortar. The street was strewn with calcined bones of horses, oxen, and sheep, which are supposed to be relics of the conflagration of 1135, when Archbishop Thurstan reduced the town to ashes when in the hands of the Scots.

WHAT AGE QUALIFIES A VOTER?—The reviving barrister at Leeds lately decided that a voter must be 21 before his name could be inserted on the register, so that a person must be at least 22 before he could exercise the franchise. At Kidderminster the sitting barrister gave an exactly opposite decision, ruling that a man was entitled to vote if he was of age when his year of qualification expired.

The fact that a marriage has taken place between a Hindoo widow and an Indian law student in Calcutta, both being of different castes, has created a sensation in Calcutta and many parts of India, as it is considered an auspicious forerunner of the death of Hindooism and caste prejudice, which it is the hope of the reformer and well-wisher of India to see some day overturned. The railway has done its mite in this direction, as men of different castes now freely mingle together in the railway train, a proceeding which was looked upon as utterly impossible a few years since, when Indian railways were mooted.

HOUSES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.—One of the earliest packs of foxhounds on record was that kept by the then Lord Arundell of Wardour, between the years 1690 and 1700; and the family are in possession of memoranda proving that they occasionally hunted from Wardour Castle, in Wiltshire, and at Breamore, near Salisbury, now the seat of Sir Edward Hulse, but then the occasional residence of Lord Arundell. These hounds were kept by the Arundells until about the year 1745, when the sixth Lord Arundell died. After his decease, they were kept by his nephew, the Earl of Castlehaven, by whom and his successors they were hunted until the death of the last earl of that name, about the year 1782. The pack was then sold to the celebrated Hugo Meynell, Esq., of Quorndon Hall, Leicestershire; and it is probable that they contributed largely to the establishment of that gentleman's foxhunting fame, and have been the progenitors of some of the Quorn hounds of the present day.

LANDFALL IN NORFOLK.—On Thursday, Sept. 29, a singular phenomenon took place in a field on the farm of Mr. Hastings, of Longham, in Norfolk, on the estate of the Earl of Leicester. Suddenly, and without warning, for Mr. Hastings had driven over the spot 20 minutes before, the ground gave way, and there appeared a chasm of 30 feet in diameter, and of more than 17 in depth. Mr. Hastings may be said to have had a narrow escape; for if the surface had sunk, as it might well have done, beneath the concussion of his gig, he must have been buried alive. At first there was no sign of danger to the adjoining surface; but as crowds of country people have flocked to the spot, thinking that they were visiting the scene of an earthquake, the land under this unusual pressure seems likely to give way in other places. Cracks are

plainly seen for a radius of 50 yards, in every direction. From the immediate appearance of water, it is supposed that the ground has been undermined by a subterraneous stream; but the science at command in a country place can do no more than guess at the cause of the phenomenon. One side of the chasm now looks as if it were the opening of a cave, the earth above which is a mere crust. There is a sensible depression of a foot or two over quite an acre of ground. Perhaps the cause is to be sought in the extraordinary dryness of the land, the like of which Mr. Hastings cannot remember during his occupation of half a century.

THE DIAMOND-SEEKER.

CHAPTER I. A TERRIBLE SECRET.

A STAVELY vessel was approaching the harbour of Rio Janeiro, direct from Lisbon. Among her passengers were the Count de Paos and his only child, a golden-haired girl of thirteen or fourteen years. The count had become dissatisfied with the administration of public affairs in his native country, or disgusted with the preference over him of men greatly his inferiors, and had accordingly made up his mind to emigrate to Brazil, with all his wealth, and purchase an estate in the province of Rio. The peak of Corcovado had long been visible, and the passengers were seated around the deck, or standing in groups forward, engaged in an earnest scrutiny of the shores to which their thoughts had so long been directed, when the count came out of the cabin and looked shorewards with the rest, exchanging a few words with his daughter.

"Here is to be our home, Berta," he observed, as he extended one hand toward the setting sun, and drew the gentle girl affectionately to his breast with the other. "Let the pain we have felt at leaving our ancestral halls be forgotten in this sunny realm. If your sainted mother were only alive and with us, I think we should have more to welcome here than to regret beyond the waters."

It was at this moment that the mate of the vessel, Joas Vallos, crossed the deck near the nobleman and his daughter, superintending the execution of some order; and again, as had occurred many times during the voyage, he heard a number of voices remarking upon the striking resemblance he bore to the noble passenger. In good truth, he was about the same age, with hair and complexion of the same hue, with a form of the same height and proportions, and with a very perfect general likeness. The only noticeable difference in their appearance were those owing to their different characters, habits, dress, &c. The mate had an evil expression on his countenance, which the count had not, and his eyes frequently gleamed with a light which no one ever saw in the calm and honest gaze of the nobleman; but there was an unmistakable resemblance between them.

"That man!" whispered Berta to her father, with a shudder, as she averted her eyes from the mate. "How his glances have watched and menaced us! I fear he has some evil purpose against us."

"Oh, no," responded the count, with a soothing and assuring smile. "What evil purpose could he have? We shall be rid of all these unpleasant associations in a few hours."

The duty which called the mate forward having been performed, he sauntered aft, with a few stealthy glances at the count and his child. As he approached the wheel, where a number of seamen were standing, he singled out one of them with an expressive gesture, and went below, immediately followed by the sailor. When they had reached the lower hold, the mate paused, in the semi-twilight there reigning, and said:

"Well, Grotos, how do you feel about the project?"

"As before," was the whispered reply.

"That's good," muttered Vallos. "Not three minutes ago, while forward, I heard half a dozen voices discussing my resemblance to the count; and this fact would have decided me, if I had felt any hesitation in the matter."

"Well, the plan is to be carried out?" inquired the sailor.

"To the letter," replied the mate. "Let us now understand each other, and fully note the work to be done. Here is the Count de Paos, emigrating to Brazil, an entire stranger to everybody, with a vast amount of money and jewels, lulls of exchange, and all that sort of thing. Here am I a perfect image of the count, without money or friends, and the mere mate of a vessel. Having brains, however, with a clear head, desperate courage, and a sworn resolve to rise in the world at somebody's expense, I have resolved to remove the count as soon as he goes ashore, and to step into his shoes."

"Exactly," ejaculated Grotos, with a courageous appreciation of the daring scheme. "The count is to be shut up or destroyed, while you step into his station and honour. I have promised my assistance for a third of all the money you realize from the job. But what shall we do with the girl?"

"She will follow her father's fate," said Vallos, "whatever that may be. Perhaps we shall not have to kill them. It is enough for the present that we will not hesitate at anything essential to our success."

The project was further discussed by the two villains, and then, not to attract notice, they returned to their duties.

As such a villainous plot as this brief conversation had unfolded could be conceived only by an intelligent and accomplished rascal, it may be well to remark that Joas Vallos was no vulgar knave, but an educated spendthrift and profligate, who had once moved in a respectable circle, and who, after breaking the hearts of his parents, had rapidly sunk to the sphere in which we find him.

For some months he had been canvassing desperate schemes of bettering his fortunes, and this project concerning the Count de Paos, had presented itself to his mind in a season of bitterness and dissatisfaction, when he was ready for any measure, however desperate, which promised such a desirable change in his lot. He had found an accomplice in one of the common sailors of the vessel, a fellow as reckless and wicked as himself, and the atrocious plot was now fully discussed and settled.

All unaware of this terrible scheme against him, the count had cherished the most hopeful anticipations of his future. After reaching the city, and passing through the usual trials of the custom house, &c., he and his daughter had proceeded to a hotel, without noticing that they were followed and watched by the two plotters. Berta's nurse had died on the passage, so that she and her father had not a single acquaintance in the country, although he had brought various letters of introduction.

The following morning, immediately after breakfast, the count was waited upon by a real estate agent, who, having seen the count's name in a list of arrivals in a daily journal, and presuming that he would be pleased to hire or buy an establishment, had taken the liberty of inviting his attention to a most desirable property just out of the city, in the direction of Corcovado. The agent had brought a carriage with him, the ride promised to be pleasant, and there were several hours to spare before the count could see his bankers and other correspondents; so that he concluded, after inquiring the views of Berta, to accept the invitation of the agent, and the party were soon driving outside of the city.

Discoursing pleasantly by the way, and enjoying the fresh air and beautiful scenery, they had reached a lonely place in an obscure path approaching the mountain, when the count and Berta beheld a man who was dressed exactly like the count, wearing a similar beard, and bearing a complete resemblance to him.

"Look, father!" exclaimed Berta. "What does this mean?"

And she became deathly pale.

"There is some plot here," responded the count. "That man is the mate of the vessel in which we came from Lisbon. Hold on, senator, I—"

Joas reached the side of the carriage with a few hasty steps, at the same instant that Grotos—for the pretended agent was he—stopped the horses. Before the count could comprehend the intentions of the ruffian, they threw themselves upon him, overpowering him in a moment, and binding him hand and foot. Berta had fainted at the first signs of this violence.

"Not a word, count," said Vallos, in a fierce whisper. "No help can come to you here. You must submit to your fate."

Placing himself beside the helpless nobleman, he bade Grotos resume the reins and drive deeper into the solitudes adjoining the mountain. They at length reached a little cabin, half hidden under luxuriant vegetation, which the scheming mate had visited beforehand, and where it was proposed to confine the prisoners for the present. Flitting his horses, Grotos bore the unconscious girl into the hut, followed by his accomplice, bearing her father.

"Now to enlighten you a little," said the triumphant villain, as he placed his prisoner on the hard floor. "Your honoured name, your wealth, my resemblance to you—in short, all the circumstances of our respective lives, have induced me to take the extraordinary measures of which you are the object. From this moment, you are one as dead—at the best, an unfortunate relative of mine—and I am the Count de Paos! I have been up all night, arranging my plans, procuring a garb suitable to my new condition, and perfecting my little resemblances to you. The result of all these preparations is, that you will be

taken up into the wilderness as a madman fancying yourself a count—your daughter unfortunately inheriting your malady—while I, taking all your money and papers, &c., will enter upon a pleasant career as the Count de Paos!"

"Oh, monster! Fiend!" exclaimed the count, with the air of a man thoroughly horrified and appalled.

"I am aware of the blame you can reasonably attach to this conduct," said Vallos, in a cold and implacable voice; "but it is the scheme of the universe that the happiness of one man must be built upon the misery of another. You must be abased that I may be exalted. I cannot and will not drag out the miserable existence I have been recently leading. All I can say is, that I will do you and your daughter no unnecessary injury. Your wealth and station are the sole objects of my ambition; and to acquire them, I would not shrink from any peril, nor recoil from any crime!"

He turned to Grotos, addressing a few words to him; and the latter set out on his return to the city with the carriage.

Vallos remained with his victim, robbing him of all his papers and valuables, and occasionally condescending to answer his reproaches and expostulations.

In the course of two hours, his accomplice came back and relieved him, and he then proceeded boldly to the hotel where the count had been stopping, and called for his bill, and settled it, remarking that he had found a house to suit him.

In the course of the forenoon, Vallos, as the Count de Paos, presented his drafts and bills of exchange, and received the most distinguished consideration.

Having been practising more than two weeks, in his leisure moments, on the signature of his victim, he had no difficulty in signing the name he had assumed.

He purchased a large tract of land in an uninhabited section of the country, among the sources of the Parahiba river, and made his preparations for removing his prisoners thither.

About the middle of the afternoon, having hired a car for himself and his unfortunate relatives, as he termed the count and his daughter, he proceeded direct to Valença, the northernmost terminus of the newly-made railroad.

He was attended by Grotos, by two villainous-looking overseers, and by a negro woman he had bought as nurse for the girl.

The next day, having procured some mules at Valença, he set out for his newly-acquired estate.

We will not attempt to follow him through all his operations. Suffice it to say that he was absent from Rio six or seven weeks.

Grotos returned with him; and both were in the most jubilant mood possible.

After a few days of inquiry, the false count purchased a handsome estate in the suburbs of Petropolis, in a fertile valley between that city and the head of the bay; and a few days more found him comfortably settled on this estate, and beginning to emerge into an enviable notoriety as the noble Count de Paos.

"And now," said Grotos, the evening after his confederate had entered into full possession of his stolen honours, and while they were seated at their ease in his splendid residence, "I want you to come to a settlement. At last we are completely triumphant. The real count is safely imprisoned in a Brazilian wilderness, under the charge of a couple of men who are even worse than you or I, while we have come into possession of his wealth and station. I now want my third of the spoils. I think of setting up as a Grand Lama myself."

"Very well, Grotos," replied Vallos. "I am at your service. As you say, we are triumphant. The only thing remaining to be done is to write to my wife, and tell her that I am dead. If you will have the goodness to write a few lines from my dictation, the last tie between us and the past will be severed, and we shall be ready to enter upon our new existence."

Grotos expressed his readiness to serve his accomplice.

Vallos produced writing materials, and the unsuspecting Grotos seated himself at a desk, in one corner of the apartment, and wrote the desired letter from his dictation.

"That'll do the business for her," muttered Vallos, as his eyes glanced over the epistle. "You are pained to announce, as a seaman of my vessel, that I am accidentally drowned, and that you enclose the wages due, and so forth. Very good. Just address an envelope, and then we shall be ready to devote our attention to our accounts."

While Grotos was engaged in this final service, Vallos drew a heavy pistol from the breast of his coat, and prepared to execute the purpose he had formed. The instant the unsuspecting confederate had ad-

dressed the letter, a furious blow descended upon his unprotected head, and he fell to the floor.

"I had to do it," was the comment of Vallos, in a perfectly calm tone of voice. "Grotes was a good fellow, but decidedly vulgar—incapable of raising himself to the position of a gentleman. In two months, he would have squandered his share at the gaming-table, and been dogging me for more. Besides, he has a low love for liquor, and would have betrayed my secrets in his cups. This is the only way in which I can make all sure."

He raised the insensible body in his arms, and bore it down to the cellar. Beneath this cellar there was a stout wine vault, guarded by an iron door, which even the thieving negroes of Brazil would have found it difficult to force. Depositing the body of his friend in this tomblike vault, Vallos closed and locked the entrance and returned to the room.

"Thus I destroy the last trace of Joas Vallos," he muttered, "and enter fair and square upon my career as the Count de Paos. I now see my way clear. I shall produce my letters of introduction, be presented at court, enter the best society, revel in every luxury, and perhaps marry a noble and beautiful heiress of the province."

Thus starting upon his new career of iniquity, the false Count de Paos realized an existence which far surpassed his wildest hopes. As it was known that the count had been attended by his daughter, it became necessary for him to remark that she had gone to Paris to complete her education. As it was further known that the count was a widower, he found himself an object of much interest among the ladies of the circle in which he moved. He sent to his wife the letter Grotes had written at his dictation, and gave the body of his unfortunate but guilty confederate a decent, but secret burial, the night after he had come to his end by the slow process of starvation.

He was presented to the emperor, who thanked him for enriching the country with his honoured name and wealth, and eventually he was selected to be his private secretary. He studied hard, drilled himself in politeness, in languages, and in accomplishments; resolutely casting off everything that savoured of his former life, and acquiring those qualifications he had deemed essential to the character he had assumed. In this round of successes and triumphs, a number of years glided away.

CHAPTER II.

A COFFEE ESTATE IN BRAZIL.

In the vicinity of Petropolis, the royal residence of Brazil, there is an immense coffee plantation, consisting of several thousand acres, which was formerly owned by a wealthy Portuguese gentleman, named Dos Montes.

The senhor was a gruff and taciturn parent, exclusively devoted to business; a hard master to his numerous slaves; and an overbearing and litigious neighbour.

For several years he had been in the habit of shipping a thousand sacks of coffee yearly from his warehouse on Palace Square, in Rio—to say nothing of the sugar and other products of his estate—so that he had become one of the richest planters in the province.

The family of Dos Montes comprised only himself and his daughter, Nona; his wife—who had been an English girl, the daughter of a British consul at Rio—having been dead several years. Nona was eighteen years of age, and endowed through her mother with rare loveliness and intelligence, and with those finer graces and endowments which beautify even beauty. For a year or two past, as Senhor Dos Montes marked the increase of his vast riches, and noted with pride the ripening charms of Nona, an evil ambition had been growing in his heart—a desire to marry the beautiful girl to some high dignitary of the empire, and to gain through that act some post of honour under the government. A longing for power had become even stronger in his soul than his love of money, and he had accordingly favoured the suit of the Count de Paos, secretary of his majesty—a suitor who stood very high in the favour and confidence of his imperial master.

There was a difficulty in the way of this project, however, as we shall see—the lovely Nona having some time previously given her heart, and promised her hand to a young man named Bertram Bavaro, who had been several years a chief clerk in the shipping-house of her father.

Late one afternoon, Senhor Dos Montes stood near the wide-arched gate that opened upon the roadway, and gazed about him, with a satisfied air, upon his vast possessions. Just before him stretched a broad avenue, which led directly up to the main entrance of his mansion, and was bordered on each side with even rows of coffee trees, through the branches and foliage of which flickered the last rays of the setting sun. The mansion itself was large, square, and roomy; built in the European

style, with French windows opening on wide piazzas which encircled the house; and stood on a slight elevation. On either side of it were groves of palms and oranges, and here and there a forest tree, draped with clinging parasites, towered high above the rest. Back of the house were the most gorgeous flowers that a tropical climate can produce, and trees with a wild luxuriance of foliage and sweet-scented blossoms, and in the centre of this garden was a large and beautiful fountain completely shaded on every side. On one hand were the coffee fields with groups of busy slaves picking berries, and in the distance were the negro quarters, in the centre of which, in its little tower, hung the great plantation bell which used to summon slaves to and from work. The soft green of the smoothly shaven lawn afforded relief to the eye from the brilliant foliage on every side. The day had been unusually warm, even for Brazil; but as evening approached, soft breezes swept inward from the sea and downward from the mountains and lent a delicious coolness to the air.

Senhor Dos Montes turned towards the dusty road, as if expecting a visitor, and said, aloud:

"The Count de Paos will soon be here, and I may as well go in and prepare Nona to receive him."

He walked slowly up the avenue and entered the house. The room to which he retired, the library of his elegant mansion, was fitted up in the most costly European style, and he seated himself on the soft cushions of his elbow chair with enviable feelings of satisfaction. As he bent forward to arrange his gouty foot on its cushions, preparatory to summoning his daughter to his presence, he glanced through the open window and beheld Nona, at some distance, standing in the shade of a cinchona tree, in deep conversation with a man who appeared to be a muleteer. With a gesture and look of annoyance, Senhor Dos Montes rang the bell to summon her to his presence. At the same moment his ear caught the sound of wheels, and soon after a servant ushered the expected visitor into the apartment.

Joas Vallos, or the false Count de Paos, had changed greatly since he was the mate of a vessel four years before. He was apparently about forty years of age, with that formal and studied suavity which universally characterizes a treacherous rascal. He was dressed with as much care and elegance as if he had been on an embassy to a king. His fingers glittered with diamonds, and he wore a profusion of lace and ruffles. His appearance would have been decidedly foppish, had it not been for the portliness of his figure. As he extended his hand to Dos Montes, with a bow and a scarcely audible greeting, there was something really sinister in the light of his dark eyes, and in the cold and hollow intonations of his voice.

"I am glad, my dear count, you have not failed to come," said the planter, when the servant had withdrawn and the visitor was comfortably seated by his side; "and now we will proceed—"

The count interrupted the speaker by a gesture, as he glanced rapidly and searchingly around, with the wary and cautious air suited to a conspirator.

"It is all right—we are quite alone," replied Dos Montes to the mute inquiry. "My boys know that I would take off their ears—or heads, for that matter—if I caught them listening. Besides, we can be cautious!"

Speaking in low tones, the two men entered upon a conversation of the most interesting nature.

"Since I was here," said the secretary, after a few preliminary remarks, "some most astounding developments have taken place at the palace. His Majesty is quite out of patience with Senhor Cordelho, the prime minister, and has asked me, in confidence, to suggest a successor!"

"Well, well," ejaculated Senhor Dos Montes, with a sudden flush on his face.

"As I at once thought of you," continued the visitor, "I made up my mind not to present any name to his Majesty until after I had seen you."

The planter was momentarily speechless. At last the power he had so earnestly coveted, seemed about to be placed in his hands.

"If, therefore," the count proceeded, "you are willing to accept the high post in question, I do not doubt but that you can have it. I would respectfully suggest that you lend his Majesty a handsome sum of money, as you can doubtless do without any inconvenience. You know the treasury is empty, and the revolutionists are still rampant in various parts of the empire. As a new power at the helm of state, it will be a wise measure for you to bring forward a national loan, and to strengthen the government to a reasonable extent with your own resources."

"All this I am ready to do," replied Dos Montes. "I shall be only too happy to serve his Majesty in any capacity in which I can be useful."

"Then, as I said before, there is no doubt of your elevation to the post. I will recommend you to his Majesty the first thing in the morning. I can tell him, without flattering you, that you are eminently

fitted for such a marked example of his respect and confidence; that you represent the great landed and productive interests of the empire, and that no better selection can be made from his subjects. In a word, you can depend upon being officially called, at an early day, to the position you are so well qualified to take."

Again Dos Montes was overcome by his emotions. He could only grasp the hand of his visitor, and cling to it with a warmth that would have embarrassed a less self-possessed man than the Count de Paos.

"And now that this affair is settled, let me allude to the services I require at your hands, Senhor Dos Montes," continued the secretary. "You understand what I mean? More than ten years have passed since the death of my wife, and over a third of that period since my poor daughter died in Paris. In a word, I think I have been bound up in my bereavements long enough."

"You refer, of course, to your proposed marriage with my daughter," replied Dos Montes, eventually finding his voice. "Depend upon the accomplishment of your every wish in this matter. I have already announced to Nona that I have chosen you to be her husband."

"And what is her answer?"

"To be frank with you," replied Dos Montes, after some hesitation and embarrassment, "she has offered some opposition to my wishes; an opposition you must not take at all to heart, since it arises from no other consideration than that she is not much acquainted with you. I trust all her little prejudices will be readily overcome, and that she will receive you as a husband with the same pride and joy with which I shall receive you as a son."

For an instant there was a half-convulsive expression on the countenance of the secretary, an expression which betrayed that he was deeply in love with Nona, and terribly anxious about the result of his suit, as if he were not wholly unconscious of the difficulties in the way of his wooing.

"Let us not deceive ourselves, my dear Dos Montes," was the response, in a serious and thoughtful tone of voice. "I have been assured that the heart of Nona is another's; that she is engaged—yes, positively engaged—to a young fellow who was formerly in your employ—"

"The story is false, count," interrupted Dos Montes, in a state of feverish wrath and excitement. "She would not dare to engage herself to any one without my knowledge and approval."

He calmed himself in a moment, and added with an assumed smile:

"It is true that there is a foundation for the rumor to which you have given expression; true that Nona had a fancy for Bavaro, in her childish years. He had saved her from drowning in the bay, and as my chief clerk, had frequent access to my house. I dismissed him, of course, the instant I found out his presumption, and he started for the diamond districts of the interior, in the desperate hope of finding diamonds enough to give him a right, as far as money was concerned, to ask Nona's hand in marriage. 'Brazil furnishes diamonds to the whole world,' he said to me, 'and great fortunes are made in seeking.' With this, he signified his intention of going diamond-hunting; and as he is one of those chivalrous fellows everybody ought to wish well, I told him he should have Nona if he came back with diamonds enough to suit me."

The secretary looked exceedingly grave at this announcement, and ejaculated:

"What if he should come back?"

"He won't," responded Dos Montes. "I happen to know that he will never return to this vicinity—never! There is no occasion, my dear count, to give yourself the least uneasiness on his account. I swear to you, by everything sacred, that no one but yourself shall ever marry my daughter!"

"Enough! I will take courage."

"That's right! Come up and dine with me to-morrow or next day, and you shall see Nona and enter fairly upon your relations to us as accepted suitor for her hand."

"Thanks, thanks! But what, may I ask, is likely to be the nature of my reception? She has shunned and avoided me continually, or else treated me with studied coldness. My past experiences, in the attempt to win her affections, have been anything but pleasant!"

"She shall treat you so no longer," responded Dos Montes, with a glow on his face. "I will be obeyed as her father. I will lose no time in giving her my commands, and can safely promise that you will find her agreeable and sociable when you again come to see me."

The Count de Paos involuntarily sighed as he listened to this assurance, and then said:

"Very well, my dear Dos Montes. I will depend upon your authority as Nona's father and upon your good will. You can place equal dependence upon me as regards the advancement of your interests with his

Majesty. Thus we can render a mutual service and acquire a mutual advantage."

Senhor Dos Montes produced some wine, and the two men further discussed their several projects. Their eventual agreement was that Dos Montes should be prime minister, through the favour of the secretary; and that the latter should be the husband of Nona, through the favour of her father. And so everything was satisfactorily arranged, as far as the wishes and plans of the two men were concerned.

When the secretary of his Majesty had turned to the carriage in which he had come down from the royal residence, and fairly taken his departure, Dos Montes again touched a bell, and sent a domestic to summon his daughter to his presence. Scarcely a moment elapsed before she made her appearance.

"Dear father," she said, as she seated herself in the chair recently occupied by the count, "I have been waiting an hour for that odious secretary to go! I have good news to tell you."

He looked sternly at her without speaking, provoked by the manner in which she had alluded to the Count de Paos.

"The truth is," the gentle girl continued—not without some blushes and timidity—"I have just received a message from Bertram. He has nearly recovered from his illness, and is coming home in a few days, with a whole handful of diamonds! As you promised me to him on condition of his acquiring wealth enough to support me, I hope you will not make any further objections to our marriage, and—"

"Silence, girl!" interrupted Dos Montes, in a towering passion, as he started to his feet and commenced pacing to and fro. "What do you mean by bringing that worthless fellow up at such a moment? If he had all the diamonds on the earth he should never marry you. Have you no ambition, child? Would you not like to bear a noble title, and shine at his Majesty's court?" He paused abruptly for an answer.

"No," replied Nona, in a gentle though firm tone. "I have no ambition, father, if I must sacrifice my heart to accomplish it. I would rather be the wife of Bertram Bavao and assist him in earning our daily bread, than marry an emperor without love."

"Fool! fool!" ejaculated Dos Montes, bitterly. "Would you rush headlong to destruction? I will no longer submit to such notions on your part. It is time you had outgrown these silly and romantic notions and become a woman. The noble Count de Paos, whose family is one of the oldest in Portugal, has done us the honour of proposing for your hand. As his wife, you would be envied by every woman in Brazil. He is wealthy; and I should give you a magnificent dowry, so that no happiness would be denied you. What do you say to his offer?"

"Tell Count de Paos," said Nona, with a slight flush on her cheek, "that I appreciate the honour he would do us, but that I decline to be his wife."

"But I command you to receive his addresses," exclaimed Dos Montes, in a loud and angry tone. "You have never disobeyed me before, and you will not begin now. You shall treat him with the respect due to your betrothed husband when he dines with me to-morrow."

"I have given you my answer, dear father. I can never be his wife. I am promised to Bertram Bavao, who is returning with the ability to fulfil the sole condition you imposed upon him—the acquisition of sufficient wealth to support me in the style to which I have been accustomed, and—"

"Silence, I tell you!" interrupted Dos Montes with an apoplectic flush on his countenance, as the fear took possession of his heart that his elevation to the post of prime minister was becoming exceedingly problematical. "You shall be the count's wife two weeks from to-night, as certainly as you live. You shall receive him to-morrow as an accepted suitor and an honoured guest! Go to your room, and let me hear no more of that accursed diamond seeker, whom I hope the jaguars and pumas have devoured before this."

The girl looked sorrowfully at her enraged parent, for a moment endeavouring to defend herself and appease his anger; but his rage increased so much that she soon retired from the apartment.

"Destruction seize him," exclaimed the planter when he was alone. "How is it that he is still in the land of the living?—still writing to my daughter? A week ago, on hearing from Nona where he was, I sent a messenger to Jorge Melandez, the fierce bandit, telling him where he could find a prize worthy of his notice. Can it be that Melandez has failed to rob him?"

CHAPTER III.

In a wild mountain gorge of the Serra Mantiguera, a hundred miles north of Rio Janeiro, where rocks rise above rocks, and crags above crags, thousands of feet above the rude paths winding at their base, there

was a small *posada*, or inn, where Bertram Bavao, the lover of Nona, had passed through the dangers and sufferings of a severe illness. He had been attacked here with a fever, when thus far on his homeward journey, and would have died if it had not been for the devotion of a couple of assiduous friends—the wife of his host, and a comrade, named Pizarro, a young Spaniard, who had roamed over three-fourths of the habitable globe, and had joined our hero in his search for diamonds.

For more than two weeks Bertram had raved concerning Nona, his jewels, &c., barely retaining his hold upon life; but he was at length out of danger and rapidly convalescing, so that he had already sent letters to his betrothed, announcing his speedy return, as we have seen in the chapter preceding.

On the very evening succeeding the afternoon on which the false Count de Paos and Senhor Dos Montes were disposing of Nona's hand, without so much as asking her leave, Bavao was swinging in his hammock, under a rosewood tree, in a little dell just behind the inn mentioned. His face was terribly pale and his form reduced to a mere skeleton of the hale and hearty man who, three weeks before, had been striding homewards at a rate of speed which would have exhausted an ordinary mule; but the old look of manliness and intelligence was on the face of the young hero, and whenever he thought of Nona the old look of love was in his eyes. He had caused his hammock to be hung in this spot in the morning, and the warmth of the air, the gentle zephyrs occasionally stirring the leaves, and the rugged sublimity and beauty of the whole scene had enchained him nearly all day in this snug covert.

"And so," was his low-toned soliloquy, as he looked musingly up at the clear sky, "I have conquered! No question of wealth can now come between me and my dear Nona! I have been far more successful than my most sanguine hopes promised! These diamonds," and he placed his hand upon a package sewed in the breast of his coat, "are worth, at the least, more than a hundred thousand dollars. The hand of Providence has clearly been with me in all my struggles and sufferings, and at last I am near my reward."

While he was thus reposing in his hammock with his thoughts in the strange world—half imagination and half reality—of convalescence, his comrade came forth from the inn and approached him. Pizarro was the *beau ideal* of an adventurer, one day in the uppermost heaven of careless gaiety, and the next in the lowest abysses of despair. He spoke half a dozen languages fluently, possessed a cosmopolitan heart, had tried his hand at almost everything, and passed through a host of vicissitudes and perils. If his eventful history could have been recorded, with one-half of the graces with which its varied chapters were told by him, it would have made one of the most interesting narratives ever committed to writing. He had graphic powers of storytelling, which made him the solace of a long journey, the muleteers forgetting their aches and pains in listening to him. Besides all these lighter charms of his character, there was no man so serviceable and trustworthy as he. If a mule fell over the rocks, Pizarro was the man who recovered the load of the animal from the abyss into which he had fallen. If any one was sick, José was the first to nurse him; and if any one wanted money, was in trouble, or had met with any mishap or grievance whatever, José was the very first person to whom application was made. In a word, he was the life and soul of any circle in which he moved.

And yet the saddest of tragedies was hidden under the smiling and pleasant exterior of José Pizarro. He had loved a gentle and noble girl in the early years of his manhood, but she had died before the time appointed for their marriage. Years had passed since then, but he could not speak of his lost Dolores without unutterable grief and regret. He held her memory in the deepest veneration, and the sad event exercised almost insensibly a chastening and ennobling influence over his whole life. At times he was as lighthearted as a school girl, and at others moody and reckless; he being no exception to the leading characteristics of men of deep thoughts and great sorrows.

"Ah, here you are," he said to Bertram. "What a glorious night; just such an hour as takes me back to past romances and past dreams; the balls of Paris and Vienna; the gondolier parties of Venice, and the fandangos of Mexico. It is on such nights as this that one revels in the exuberance of this human existence. But hadn't you better come in?" he added, abruptly changing the subject. "I am afraid to have you remain here alone. There are plenty of fellows hereabouts who would run a hunting knife through this hammock and its contents, if they had a hint of the diamonds in your possession. Come! Let's retire to our den for the night."

Our hero accepted the assistance of his faithful companion, and the two proceeded along the narrow path leading to the river.

"I shall be able to start for Petropolis to-morrow," remarked Bavao. "Senhor Dos Montes has promised to consent to my marriage with Nona, on condition of my success—and I have been more than successful. A few days more, and I shall reach the haven of my rest!"

On reaching the inn, the young men proceeded directly to the little chamber they had occupied since their arrival.

They seated themselves near the solitary window of the apartment, which looked out upon the path winding through the gorge, in the direction of the Parahiba river.

They discussed the honesty and goodness of their host and hostess, the beauty of the night, and the brightening future of our hero, all unmindful of the plots against him and Nona.

Suddenly, as Pizarro was looking forth upon the picturesque scene, he beheld a couple of men creeping towards the inn, under the cover of a stone wall, from the direction of the main pass. He did not move or speak until they had passed, crouching on the ground, immediately under one end of the front piazza, so near to him that he could see the pistols and knives in their belts, and hear the hum of their low whispering.

"That's a sinister proceeding," he then whispered to Bavao, pointing out the incident he had noticed, "Where are our weapons?"

Not another word was said till the two friends had looked to their weapons, and placed them where they could be readily found, if needed.

"Ha! there are two more," whispered Pizarro, as a second couple of ruffians stole towards the house, and passed out of sight behind it. "This begins to look serious! It can't be that the host has betrayed us to some band of robbers?"

"No," replied Bavao; "I will answer for his honesty with my life. Where is he now?"

"Below, undoubtedly. Both he and his wife were in the kitchen, busy with their breakfast preparations, as we came up-stairs. Ah!"

The last exclamation was caused by the appearance of a third brace of robbers, who took up their station at the front entrance of the house.

"This is really an attack upon us," said Pizarro, in a calm but earnest voice. "There are six of them already!"

Our hero did not reply; but a look of unchangeable resolution swept over his face.

He fully determined, in view of the importance of the diamonds to his proposed happiness, not to relinquish them except with his life.

"There comes a seventh of our rapacious friends," observed Pizarro, as a burly-looking ruffian rode out of the main pass and advanced towards the door of the inn. "He appears to be the leader of the party!"

Bavao bent forward, and scrutinized the chief of the robbers, as he evidently was, as he rode slowly up to the door.

He was armed with a stout sabre, in addition to the knives and pistols he carried, and looked like a giant, by sheer contrast with the diminutive mule upon which he was mounted.

"Hallo, there!" he shouted, as he dismounted. "Wake up, Senhor Posadero!" and he passed beyond the view of the eager watchers, ascending the steps and shaking the door.

The two friends fairly held their breath in their excitement, watching and listening, with their hands on their weapons.

"Ah, there you are," they heard the robber-chief saying to the host. "Excuse me for troubling you—but business is business. I hear, from good authority, that a young man named Bavao has been sick on your hands during the last few weeks, and that this young fellow has a handsome quantity of diamonds in his possession."

The innkeeper gave utterance to a cry of consternation and grief, which came from the very bottom of his soul.

"You hear?" whispered Pizarro. "We are in for trouble! But how have we been betrayed?"

Although neither of the young men could answer this question, the reader will have no difficulty in comprehending the source of the robber's information. He had learned the facts in the case from Dos Montes, just as the latter had learned them from the unsuspecting confidence of his daughter.

"I say!" continued the robber, smiting his clenched hand against the door with such emphasis that it shook on its hinges. "You see that I am on the right scent; that I know all about it; and that it's diamonds or death to you and all under your roof!"

Our hero and Pizarro heard the robber refer to his men, who had completely surrounded the house in such numbers "as to make a sure thing of it," to use the robber's complacent assertion. They also heard the host and his wife entreating their dreaded visitor to show mercy, and not terrify a sick man to death,

etc., using all the arguments and entreaties at their command. The voice of the robber was heard again, in low but resolute tones, and then the door at the foot of the chamber stairs was thrown open, and he was heard declaring:

"Go up and bring him down, diamonds and all, or I'll soon save you the trouble."

The host came hurriedly up stairs, groaning and crying, and burst into the presence of the young men with the most lugubrious expressions of terror and despair.

"The famous robber, Jorge Melendez, is below!" he exclaimed. "He has come for your diamonds! The house is surrounded by his band!"

He paused, terror-stricken and in complete despair, while Lavaro and Pizarro gazed inquiringly at each other, with an oppressive consciousness of their perils.

(To be continued.)

THE bathing season is happily over just as sharks are turning up plentiful. A basking shark, which could have made a meal of a man, was caught at Newquay, Devon, this week, about a mile from shore, where he was lying in wait—but not for what he caught.

MR. JACOB BELL, having bequeathed four pictures to the National Gallery, among which are "The Maid and the Magpie," by Sir Edwin Landseer, R.A.; "The Derby Day," by W. P. Frith, R.A.; and "The Horse Fair," by Mlle. Rosa Bonheur, and as it is four years since his death and no such pictures are in the National Gallery, the question is very naturally asked, Where are they?

THE ALHAMBRA.—An extraordinary rumour is current in Paris, that this celebrated palace of the Moorish kings of Spain is for sale. It is well known as the finest specimen of its class, and as one of the most remarkable buildings of the middle ages; and it has a great historical interest, not only in relation to its founders and original occupants, but to Charles Quint, Philippe V., and the Abencerges.

NEW DISCOVERY AT DUNNOTAR CASTLE.—It may be worthy of notice that a staircase, hitherto unknown, has been discovered by the indefatigable custodian of the castle, Mr. James Smith, but for whom many a relic belonging to the family of the Keiths would never have seen daylight; at once proving him to be both a true archaeologist and antiquarian. We believe the staircase leads to the balcony over the gateway, and have no doubt it will prove a source of interest to the numerous visitors.

THE HOUSELESS POOR.—On Friday the new act came into effect to make provisions for distributing the charge of relief of certain classes of poor persons over the whole of the metropolis for the ensuing winter. Proper casual wards are to be prepared in the metropolitan parishes, and food provided from eight o'clock at night till eight o'clock in the morning. The guardians are to keep accounts, to make a claim on the Metropolitan Board of Works, and to obtain repayment out of the general rate. The object of the act is to provide shelter and food for the houseless during the next six months, and any outlay by a police-constable authorised is to be reimbursed.

WILLIAM ROUPPELL, THE EX-M.P.—The Porchester, transport vessel, which has left Deptford this week with 300 convicts for Gibraltar, was to have taken out with them William Roupell, the ex-M.P. for Lambeth, but it was found that his stay in England is necessary in connection with the property affected by his forgeries. He is at present employed in the Extension Works at Chatham, and may be seen daily as a common labourer, dressed in a grey coarse convict suit, using a spade or pick-axe, getting stone, or yoked with other convicts to a cart on the works in progress for the enlargement of Chatham Dockyard.

THE RESULTS OF THE ALDERSHOTT CAMP EXHIBITION.—The Aldershot Camp Exhibition brought to light an amount of mechanical and artistic ability and ingenuity which present the British soldier to the public in a new and gratifying light. Every regiment in camp contributed to the display—officers, privates, and even the men's wives and children—specimens of painting, drawing, photography, carving, cabinet-making, military engineering instruments, smith's work, needle-work, and many other things of use or ornament. As regards painting and drawing, the specimens sent in by the officers were fully equalled by those of the privates, except in two or three noteworthy instances; while in mechanical works, the privates had the superiority, and their wives excelled the officers' wives in lace and fine work. The Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers were, as might be expected, among the foremost with specimens of professional work, some of which embodied contrivances which the authorities would do well to take into consideration. Thus, Corporal Dagnall exhibited a car-

tridge-pouch, combining improvements over the one at present in use: Private Southam exhibited a lint-making machine, of his own invention, which would keep an army on active service well supplied with lint; and Sergeant Griffiths showed an improved aiming-rest, combined with a stand for a photographic camera, which photographers everywhere would find useful. Indeed, one result of the exhibition has been to demonstrate the large amount of manual and inventive capability that exists in the army. Would it not be possible to turn this capability to good account; or do the rules of the society prevent the authorities from accepting improvements or suggestions made by their subordinates?

THE MOTHER'S BLESSING.

What bringeth a joy o'er thy pallid mien,
More deep than the prime of thy youth had seen?
What kindleth a beam in thy thoughtful eye,
Like the vestal flame from a purer sky?
Sweet were her tears, as the wind-harp froe,
The smile of the babe that is born to me.

What maketh thy home, with its noiseless shade,
More dear than the haunts where thy beauty strayed?

Than the dance where thy form was the zephyr's wing?

Than the crowded hall, or the charmed ring?
Than the flatterer's wile, with its siren strain?
The voice of the babe that with care I train.

What lendeth the landscape a brighter hue?

A clearer spark to the diamond dew?

What giveth the song of the bird its zest,
As straw by straw it doth build its nest?

What sweeteneth the flowers on their budding stalks?

The kiss of the child by my side that walks.

What quickeneth thy prayer when it seeks the Throne

With a fervour it never before had known?

What giveth thy life in its daily scope

For the labour of love, and the patience of hope?

The freedom from self, and the high intent,

The soul of the child that my God hath lent.

L. H. S.

SOME FACTS ABOUT DIAMONDS.

FROM DR. FEUCHTWANGER'S TREATISE ON GEMS, we take the following statements in reference to the diamond:—

"A letter was lately published from Sir David Brewster, on a curious optical phenomenon that had occurred in the construction of a diagonal lens. The diamond, previous to working, had all the appearance of internal brilliancy; but, after being polished, it presented a series of stratified shades, which rendered it useless for the required purpose. It afterwards appeared that lapidaries were acquainted with this appearance, which rendered them extremely unwilling to take the risk on themselves of cutting up diamonds for optical purposes. On a minute examination of this phenomenon, it appeared that these different shades occurred in regular strata, each section being about the one-hundredth part of an inch, and each stratum having a different focus, and being of a different degree of hardness and specific gravity. The inferences drawn from the above facts were—that the diamond was a vegetable substance, and that its parts must have been held in solution and subjected to different degrees of pressure at different stages of existence. If, on the contrary, as it has been generally believed, it is subject to the laws of crystallization, its crystals must necessarily be homogeneous.

"The diamond, being the hardest of all substances, yields to no file, scratches all other minerals, and is not touched by any. This character has become the most important of the diamond since the late discovery of the amorphous or compact diamond. It is very frequently tinged light green, but more rarely with orange, red, blue, or black; but in setting, these shades disappear, more particularly in the smaller diamonds; but there are also known diamonds of rose and pistachio-nut green colours. The blue colour is very rare. The blue diamond of Mr. Hope is one of extreme beauty and rarity, and is of immense value; the yellow diamond in the Museum of Natural History, in Paris, is likewise very remarkable for its colour and size. The black diamond, which is perfectly black, although plainly crystallized, occurs most frequently in small bristled balls, but crystalline points; the crystals are very small, grouped together in an irregular manner, and extremely refractory to the cut; it is considered the hardest of all diamonds. The green diamond is also very rare, but I have seen some beautiful specimens in the Jardin des Plantes and in Freiburg, the first in the cabinet of Abbe Haüy, and the latter in the cabinet of Werner.

"In Russia, the first diamond was discovered in

July, 1829, by Humboldt and Rose, when on their journey to Siberia, on the west side of the Uralian mountains, in the gold-washing establishments of Krestowodwiskinski, belonging to Count Schuvalow. The locality, in connection with the other circumstances of the place where the diamond was found, bears a striking resemblance to the diamond district of Brazil. The predominating rock of the spot on the Uralian mountains is a quartzose chlorite, talcose schist (talcolumite), with an admixture of iron pyrites and mica, wherein we find beds of red oxide of iron, talcose schist, limestone, and dolomite.

"At a most extensive sale of diamonds, which took place in the summer of 1837, at the auction of Bland and Bridges, London, there were twenty-four lots put up, which produced the sum of £45,000. Some of the prices were as follows:—The celebrated Nassak diamond, which weighs three hundred and fifty-seven and a half grains, and is of the purest water, was purchased for £7,000. It was considered to have been sold at a price considerably under its value. A magnificent pair of brilliant ear-rings, weighing two hundred and twenty-three and a half grains, formerly the property of Queen Charlotte, were bought for £11,000, a price infinitely below their usually estimated value. A sapphire, seventy-five and a half carats, set with brilliants for a brooch, £500.

"According to Spix and Martius, there have been produced in Brazil, from 1772 to 1818, 1,298,037 carats of diamonds—that is, in the time of the Royal Administration; but that during the lease, only 1,700,000 carats were produced, which together make 2,998,037 carats, or 1,301½ pounds, thus averaging from fourteen to fifteen ponnies per year; those brought into market by contract and being excepted.

"The largest diamond is in the possession of the Grand Mogul, and according to Tavernier, resembles in form and size half a hen's egg. Its weight is two hundred and ninety-seven and three-sixteenths carats. It was found in 1552, in the mine of Colore, a short distance to the east of Golconda, and is valued at 11,723,000 francs. It is cut as a rose-diamond, and is perfectly limpid, with the exception of a small flaw at the end of the girdle."

A SILVER cradle, worth £50, has been presented to the Mayor of Basingstoke, in consequence of the Mayoress having given birth to a son during his mayoralty.

"HER MAJESTY conferred," Mr. Disraeli said, "a ribbon" on the duke of Northumberland, because he created a Channel fleet at the moment we had none; but the man who lays out five hundred thousand pounds in building cottages on his estate as much deserves a blue ribbon as the man who creates a Channel fleet, or even at the head of a Channel fleet leads us on to victory."

ONE of the most interesting features of the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Copenhagen has been the interview between the aged Landgrave of Hesse and his granddaughter, the Princess Alexandra. He is said to have enjoyed the pleasure rarely granted, of embracing a great-grandchild—the little Prince Albert Victor standing to him in that relation.

A WHEELBARROW FULL.—An ancient barrow was opened a few days ago, near Whitechurch, in Hants. It measured eighty feet in circumference and four feet in height, and was composed of chalk, rubble, and flints. A small crushed urn, four skeletons, three those of adults, and the other a girl of about twelve years old, and a small, sunbaked urn filled with elated bones and ashes, and nine small, rudely-chipped flint arrow-heads were found in the barrow.

IF King Christian of Denmark has been somewhat unfortunate as a monarch, he has great reason to congratulate himself upon his success as a father. One of his daughters will, in all human probability, be Queen of England, and now another of those Danish roses is betrothed to the Crown Prince of Russia. The thunder of 101 guns has announced the fact to the citizens of St. Petersburg, and the electric telegraph has now announced it to Europe. The throne of Greece, and a prospective share of the thrones of England and Russia, are great prizes.

SNEEZING.—Almost throughout Africa there is some superstition connected with this convulsion. In Senegal courtiers turn the back and slap the right thigh. Old authors tell us that when the "King of Monomotapa" sneezed, it became a national concern. Those nearest the royal person howled a salutation, which was taken up by the antechamber; and when the horrid cry had run through the palace, it was repeated by the whole city. In Europe the superstition is, that St. Gregory instituted a benediction upon the sneezer because during a certain pestilence the unseemly act was a fatal symptom.—"A Mission to Golee, King of Dahome." By Richard F. Burton.



[SOPHY OVERHEARS THE PLOT.]

HALLOWE'EN.

MALDON HALL, October 27.—We have been a week here to-day, and I have never once opened my diary. There is a blank in my book from that day we left our dear mother and our quiet house till this day, October 27. But as I have made a firm resolution to keep a faithful chronicle of this year (which is now fast waxing to its close) I must write retrospectively, recording the events which have filled the week omitted, as well as I can, from memory.

Our parting from mamma was a sad one. We had never left her before, and both Margery and I feared she would be very lonely without us. We did not, on that account, wish to accept Miss Langham's invitation, but our mother thought it best that we should; she has always regretted that we knew so little of my father's family, which was an ancient and wealthy one. It was their fault that we did not.

Because my father (the son of a younger son) was not rich, only possessing the pay of an officer in the army; and because he had married a country clergyman's daughter with only a moderate dowry, they scarcely took any notice of him, an occasional invitation for the shooting season even gradually growing less frequent, till it ceased.

Sir Jonathan Langham, his uncle, lived in great style at Maldon Hall, but after his death the maidens

heiresses withdrew altogether from the world, and saw no one, not even intimate friends. We had forgotten their existence, when Miss Langham's letter of invitation to ourselves recalled them to our memories. It was really a very touching epistle, though simply and coldly worded.

In her advanced age she had lost her sister, and shortly after Miss Augusta's death a singular mortality had deprived her of the two nephews who were next in succession to the property. "She was alone," she said, "in the world; and a yearning had come over her to see and make acquaintance with poor Frank Langham's children. Would my mother spare us to her for a few weeks?"

"Allow me, however," continued the writer, "to explain that it is not with any view as to the disposal of my fortune that I send this invitation. Unhappily (as I cannot forbear thinking) my father's will disposes of it, after the death of his daughters, to the next male heir, and this heir now appears to be a young Irishman, very distantly related; though, by a pure descent he is one of the family. He is to visit me shortly."

My mother was decided in her resolution to let us go, by this part of the letter. Miss Langham could not ascribe our visit to any mercenary motive. We could not incur by it a degrading suspicion; so we came to Maldon.

It was a cold autumn twilight when we entered the

park; and a feeling of strange awe, a kind of misgiving of approaching evil, stole over me as I watched the old trees bowing their heads solemnly towards us, as if in token of a gloomy welcome. I shivered. Margery looked round at me and said, laughing:

"Somebody is walking over your grave."

"A more poetical Arab reading of such creeping of the flesh is, that something evil is near us," I replied.

"Thanks, Sophy. I am the only person near you," she said, merrily. "There! you shivered again! Are you cold?"

"No," said I, "but very melancholy. Is there not something very saddening in this old place, whose ancient trees have sheltered so many of our race, long since gone home?"

"Not to me," said bright Margery. "I can but think what a splendid inheritance it is, and how I wish Miss Langham could leave it to me. Listen—there is a chime of church-bells. Is it in honour of our appearance at the ancestral hall, do you think?"

"No," said I. "The ringers are only practising."

"You are a strange mixture of the commonplace and sentimental, Sophy," said Margery. "Do the bells say nothing to you?"

"Only, 'Sophy and Margery go home again!' to my ear; not being such an agreeable hearing as Whittington's was," said I.

Then Margery began an eager discussion about bells and their varied voices, and how people always fancy they hear in them whatever they wish; which subject continued till we drove up to the hall door of Maldon.

It is a noble old pile; and as we stepped into the ancient hall and glanced round at the pillars and arches, the old armour, and trophies of the chase, I could not help liking to feel that it had been the home of my ancestors.

A butler, whose age and appearance were in good keeping with the dwelling, ushered us into the grand library, lighted by a large glowing fire, near which sat an old lady, who rose as we entered, and leaning on an ivory stick, advanced to greet us.

A very stately person is Miss Langham of Maldon, and her manner is wonderfully courteous and gracious. I can use no other words. She led us to seats near the fire, and began a conversation by inquiring after the health of our mother, and assuring us that she felt grateful to mamma for permitting us to visit her.

"I knew your father very intimately in my youth," she said; "we were cousins, you know; but time and the changes of the world divided us. He was some years younger than myself, but he is gone first."

She sighed deeply and gazed for a moment into the blazing fire, which cast a long flickering shadow of herself against the wall. Then turning her gaze full on us, she added, addressing me:

"You most resemble your father."

"So mamma says," I replied; "Margery is exactly like our mother."

Miss Langham looked earnestly at my sister, and Margery blushed beneath the fixed gaze of the old lady.

How beautiful my sister looked in the warm fire-light! There are few girls as lovely as Margery, and so Miss Langham must have thought, though she did not, of course, express her admiration.

"I have two other guests besides yourselves," she said, after a pause. "The heir of Maldon, Mr. Cornelius O'Halloran, and a Langham—though of a remote branch. They are out shooting, but will be introduced to you at dinner. Perhaps now you would like to go to your rooms and take off your bonnets."

We assented, and were conducted by Miss Langham herself to two charming bedrooms, opening *en suite* with a small boudoir.

"These three rooms are at your disposal," she said.

"Shall I send my maid to you?"

I declined with thanks; adding that we had no lady's maid ourselves, and could dress without assistance.

"Or, at least," I added, "we help each other."

The old lady nodded approvingly, and walked away.

We unpacked, and prepared for dinner; but ever and anon between this occupation, I walked to the window, and looked out upon the park and the soft grey landscape beneath.

A new charm was added to the latter, in the near tower of a fine old church, which rose above the trees; yet the feeling of depression which had stolen over me on our entrance into the park deepened as I looked out on the heritage of my family, and I thought that, after all, it was pleasanter to live in our mother's cheerful cottage, and gaze upon our own bright flower-beds and green lawn, with its one old oak, than on the gloomy and suggestive grandeur of an ancient and extensive park.

I was glad when Margery called me to assist her in dressing, for her light chat and anxiety as to how our dresses would look drew my thoughts to cheerful commonplace.

Very lovely Margery looked that evening. I felt quite proud of the admiration I could perceive she excited.

Just before dinner, the two gentlemen guests were introduced to us by Miss Langham.

Her companion, a pleasant, chatty person, and the rector, a rather pompous old gentleman, who could appreciate the powers of the Maldon cook so well that he talked very little, were of our party.

The rector's silence was atoned for, however, by the ceaseless chatter—I can call it nothing else—of Mr. O'Halloran.

He is the most astounding individual I ever met! Tall, handsome, and admirably dressed, he is, nevertheless, vulgar!

Yes, the heir of Maldon would never be taken for a gentleman if one did not know his birth. He has a most unpleasant brogue, and uses expressions which are quaint, but which give one the idea of being the sayings of the peasantry. However, he is evidently studying to acquire a good manner, and I could not help observing that he both watched and imitated Anthony Langham, who is as distinguished-looking as a Langham should be.

I have learned since from Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Langham's companion, that the old lady is sensible of the want of refinement in her kinsman, and regrets the relationship. If he had not made his appearance in the most unexpected way, Maldon would have descended to Mr. Anthony Langham, as next male heir, and Miss Langham mourns over the entail which was to take effect after the death of herself and her sister. Still she is too high-bred to let Mr. O'Halloran see that he displeases or disgusts her, and I fancy he even thinks himself a favourite.

Mr. O'Halloran is much struck with Margery's beauty, and offers her the wildest homage, paying her compliments so personal as to be quite unpleasant. My sister blushes and looks indignant; but he is stolid, and cannot perceive that he has offended. We do not see a great deal of him—that is a comfort, as he is shooting all the day about the preserves, or rather, I fancy, talking to the gamekeepers, as Anthony says he is not a good shot.

Margery and I spend our mornings in our little boudoir, for Miss Langham sees no one till luncheon; then we write our letters and do any little work we may require. Girls who have no maids and small wardrobes must use some skill and industry to appear like ladies; and Margery has great taste and ingenuity, and can alter ribbons and rearrange trimmings, till she makes one dress do the duty of two or three. But these toilette details are quite beneath the dignity of a diary; so let me pass on to something else.

It is astonishing how fast monotonous days melt into each other and leave no trace on the memory! I cannot now recall, and put in their right places, the little incidents, the sayings, doings, thoughts, and feelings of the past week. So, adieu, neglected time! All the impression thou hast left is just that I love Miss Langham, like her companion, detest the heir, and pity that charming young Langham, who should have been the master of the old place. He is all that the lord of such a heritage ought to be—manly, courteous, gentle, kind, and intelligent.

Margery does not share my horror of O'Halloran. She began by laughing at him; she now laughs with him, and actually declares that his eyes are very fine, and that he is handsomer than Anthony Langham! If it were any other girl but Margery, I should say she saw him through a golden glamour.

October 28.—We are to have a large party here on Hallowe'en, the 31st. Miss Langham likes keeping up old customs, and we are to have all the weird rites of the charmed evening carried out. She has presented Margery and me with new dresses for the occasion—very pretty ones they are.

My beautiful sister has evidently won the hearts of both our kinsmen. Anthony Langham loves her, I can see, though he is kept from her side by the constant watchfulness of Mr. O'Halloran; so, to console himself, he takes refuge with me and admires her to me, and listens to my sisterly praises with pleased smiles. Happy Margery! If she marries him she will be truly fortunate. I told her so this evening, as we were dressing for dinner; but she only laughed, and said: "What should we live on, Sophy? He has only his wits for dowry."

A nobler inheritance in my mind than Maldon itself.

Ah! how the wind howls and moans through the trees. The night is full of noises. Surely I heard a bolt opened down-stairs. If it should be robbers!

I have listened for some time with a beating heart, but there has been no repetition of the grating sound; it must have been my fancy or the wind. I will close my book, say my prayers and go to bed; it is silly to write so late, with my fire just out and my room gloomy from the feeble light of my candles. It makes me nervous and fanciful; so good-night, my diary.

November 1.—I resume my diary to-night, because I dare not enter in it by day the events of the past twenty-four hours. Margery might glance accidentally over my shoulder, or wonder what moved me so much, and ask questions impossible to answer. My hand shakes visibly as I write. Alas! I half regretted that my diary was so barren of incident; that the days were so monotonous and unmarked by any landmarks of memory. I have incident enough now to record, to my sorrow.

Hallowe'en came. A large party assembled in the stately saloon, opened for guests for the first time in forty years. We had a grand dinner in the banquetting-room, at which Miss Langham did not preside, the rector taking her place; and after dinner we joined her in the drawing-room, and began, under her direction, the magic rites of the evening. We burned nuts together (having named them first) and read a laughing augury from their explosion or quiet combustion. We felt (blissfolded) for cups holding earth, water, emptiness, and one a pocket-pistol, these symbols being prophetic of our future husband's professions; and Mr. O'Halloran loudly exclaimed against the truth of the oracles when Margery put her little hand into the empty basin, which forboded single life. The fun of the evening moved even Miss Langham to merry smiles. It must have seemed as if a glimpse of her youth had revisited her. During a pause, she said, "There are some Hallowe'en rites more trying to the nerves than these; sowing hempseed, for example."

"What is that?" we asked, simultaneously. "The lady who questions fate," she replied, "takes some hempseed; goes at midnight to the churchyard, and sows it round the belfry tower from whence peal the marriage bells, and says:

Hempseed, I sow you;
Hempseed, I mow you;
And he that shall marry me,
Come after me and harrow ye.

We laughed, and O'Halloran (who had appeared to better advantage under these livelier auspices) declared that he wished some of the ladies would try it.

A universal exclamation of dislike to the experiment was answering him, when a footman entered, and, approaching Mr. O'Halloran, told him that a person wished to speak to him on imperative business.

I fancied that O'Halloran changed countenance a little; but he laughed still, and hoping that somebody would prove heroic, and try the hempseed sowing, he left the room.

The conversation continued on the same subject—Miss Langham, with quiet humour, regretting that the courage of the young ladies of the nineteenth century was so much inferior to that of the damsels of ancient times—till, in playful daring, I offered to sow hempseed myself. For a moment she hesitated; then she replied:

"So you shall, Sophy! Only I stipulate that you shall wrap yourself in a large shawl, and sow your hempseed running, to keep yourself warm. The church is so close at hand, and so private (shut into the grounds), that there is no real cause for fear."

"Surely you won't go, Miss Sophy!" was the general cry, and Mrs. Moore, approaching me, remonstrated in a low tone, saying that Miss Langham was a little childish on these points, and I had really better not go; but a sudden resolution possessed me to undertake the adventure, and I persisted in it.

About ten minutes or a quarter to twelve I left the hall alone, wrapt in a heavy woollen shawl, which I drew over my head. I was followed by the good wishes and remonstrances of most of the guests, who escorted me to the door.

It was a bright moonlit night, and my shadow was cast on the gravel carriage road almost as distinctly as in the sunshine. The wind sighed mournfully through the trees that waved their large arms above my head; and I confess when I turned down the steps leading to the churchyard, a thrill of awe—I would not allow it to be fear—passed through me. Everything was so still and hushed, and the tall shadow of the steeple fell so clearly on the ground in the solemn light, that I felt uneasy at the idle desecration of observing such a pagan rite on the holy ground. As I approached the church more closely, this feeling of reverential reluctance to perform my foolish task increased. Alas! if I had only obeyed it! But it was combated by the fear of ridicule, and of the doubts my companions might feel as to my real motive for not completing my task, as well as by a reluctance to cast implied blame on so aged a lady as our kind hostess.

So I took the basket in my hand, and scattered the hempseed, whispering the formula, as I ran round the tower.

Suddenly I heard the sound of footsteps.

A superstitious fear, which was quite uncontrollable, seized me.

I darted into an embrasure of the wall, and crouched breathless behind a large buttress.

The next moment, I heard voices as well as footsteps.

They came very near, and paused close to my hiding-place.

"I tell you," said one voice, "it is of no use to make a fool of yourself. You must get the property at once, or you will be found out. Here's the needful dose, if you like to give it to her."

"No," replied the voice of O'Halloran; "I can't do it. She is very old. I will wait and see what will come of it. If I am found out, why even then we shall have a good booty. We are sure of the plate, if we don't get the estates. But my belief is, we are all right, and shan't fail of success. Having taken in the lawyer hitherto, as well as the old woman, we have no real cause to fear at present; it's a long way to Ameriky, and it's nothing but your impatience to share the property that makes you urge such haste, Ned."

"Ned!" by the voice of the speaker thus named I recognised a tall, fine-looking footman, whom Miss Langham had engaged soon after her sister's death, when she resumed her long interrupted intercourse with the world.

"Well, you have heard what John Green said. He wouldn't have come down to-night to warn us for nothing. Give her this dose," continued the voice of the footman, "and you will be master here by to-morrow."

"I have said I won't, and I won't," replied O'Halloran, doggedly. "You may do it yourself, if you like; but, mind, I don't consent to it."

The footman laughed, and said, "I am too old a bird to be took with chaff. I ain't going to put my head in an 'alter for any one; but I advise you to take Jack's advice and warning. Now I must go; it's nigh upon supper time, and I shall be missed."

They moved on. The next minute O'Halloran's foot crushed something, quite audibly in the stillness.

"Hilloa!" said he, with an oath, "what's this? Hempseed all along the path!" Another oath. "Some of those confounded gals have been strewing it then! Can we have been overheard?"

"Nobody was here a minute or two ago," replied Ned; "I looked behind every buttress before we began our talk."

"They may have come since. Follow the track of the seed," said O'Halloran.

And they did follow it with fatal accuracy, and drew me, shivering with fear and horror, from my hiding-place.

"Miss Sophy!" cried Ned, in a tone of dismay. Then, with fearful oaths which even now ring in my ears, he drew a large clasp-knife from his pocket. I saw the blade glitter in the moonlight. I shut my eyes and thought a rapid prayer.

"Ned," said O'Halloran, in a whisper, "it won't do! Detection would be certain. Go home and wait, for fear you should be missed; I will take care of the gal."

Still swearing, Ned loosed his hold; but O'Halloran held my other arm firmly.

"Now, Miss Sophy," he said, as we were left alone, "you have learned your fate, and no mistake. Dis you must, and that this instant, unless you swear to me by all the saints in the calendar that you will never tell a word of what you've heard this blessed night to any human soul."

I hesitated; surely death would be preferable to even an involuntary participation in so terrible a fraud. But this heroic decision did not last. I could not help pitying myself, just as if it had been somebody else. The young life seemed more precious to me than the old inheritance of our race. I weighed (with the rapidity of excited thought) my mother's and Margery's tears against the wrong done to Anthony Langham. Besides, Ned evidently feared detection. It might come without my aid. Moreover, I am ashamed to confess it, I was dreadfully afraid of being murdered! Fear confused all my perceptions.

"Come," he said, "will you swear?"

I faltered an assent; and, there, under the gray shadow of the church, the impostor dictated an oath so dreadful that I shudder now at the bare recollection of it.

"And now, Miss Sophy," he said, when my pale lips had faltered it out, "we will go home. You have been sowing hempseed, and I, suspecting your intention, followed you for a joke, and frightened you greatly. Come, take hold of my arm, and recollect that that is the story for aunt Langham."

I obeyed in stunned despair, and we left the churchyard.

As we ascended the few steps from the gate to the park, we met Anthony Langham hastening towards them.

He said they had been alarmed at my long ab-

sence, and Miss Langham had sent him to look for me.

O'Halloran at once related how he had followed me for a joke, and how I had been so frightened by his shadow that I had nearly fainted, and was only just able to walk home. This story my pale looks certainly confirmed.

Anthony looked very vexed, I thought, and said: "Such jokes are foolish and dangerous. I feared to watch over your safety, Miss Sophy," he continued, "as I wished to have done, lest I might involuntarily alarm you, should you see me; and I did not think any one would take the liberty of really following you."

This was said with a glance of defiance at O'Halloran. I interposed to prevent a quarrel.

"Oh, it is nothing," I said; "nonsense appears to belong to Hallowe'en; and my fear was too absurd to be anything but ridiculous."

How ashamed I felt of this falsehood, especially as O'Halloran actually pressed my hand with his arm, as if to acknowledge the good faith with which I kept my vow.

Everything that followed seems confused to my memory. I know that Anthony blamed Miss Langham for her folly, and said her age was her only excuse for permitting such a thing; and that O'Halloran agreed with him, and (quite truthfully, I doubt not) regretted that I had undertaken the adventure. And then we reached home; and there were idle jests from the young people, upon Mr. O'Halloran's having "harrowed my hempest!" The wretch had the effrontery to say "he had rather harrowed my feelings, as he had given me much alarm."

I fancied that both Margery and Anthony Langham were very silent, and even appeared displeased; but then my mind was too disturbed for me to be capable of clearly judging of anything. Certainly, Margery's "good-night" was colder than usual.

November 2.—When I woke this morning I cannot describe the acute mental pain that came with the recollection of my discovery and my oath. All the cruel wrong done to Anthony Langham, the imposition practised on Miss Langham, the horrible association with a low London thief forced upon us, rushed on my mind at once.

I scarcely know how I have got through the day. I am sure I have been absent, pre-occupied, miserable, with a frightful headache, which served for an excuse for my depression.

As if instinctively aware of my complicity in the wrong done him, Anthony Langham has been cold and distant all day. That horrid O'Halloran began by paying me great attention, but I was so utterly incapable of concealing my disgust, that he perceived it, and prudently left my side.

Alas! all my days this hateful secret will weigh upon my soul.

November 3.—I had far better have died—far better! Death is a boon in comparison with my life now. What shall I do? What shall I do? Heaven have pity!

He—the wretch! the monster! the possible murderer, has proposed to Margery—has been accepted!

I have knelt at her feet; I have implored her not to marry him. She denies that it is for his wealth she accepted him; she says she loves him! She answers my tears, my agonised entreaties—angrily. She accuses me of a mean jealousy—a silly pride. Oh, Margery, my own sister—my darling, if you could but know!

They have written to tell mamma of the proposed marriage. Will she consent? I have also written to implore her not to do so. My letter was eager, wild, impassioned; surely she cannot read it, and not perceive that some strong motive urged me to write it.

O'Halloran caught me alone for a few moments after I had learned the news. He began by urging on me the fact that he was restoring to us the inheritance of the family; that we should benefit by his crime; when I gave utterance to my agony, my disgust, my horror, and warned him that, if he persisted in seeking Margery's hand, I might be tempted to break my oath, he threatened to take my life. Perhaps, after all, my cowardice has only saved it for a few days. The two villains have every reason to put me out of the world. What shall I do? Break an oath, and such an oath? I, who have been trained by my father to think even a promise sacred! I am indeed in the toils. Oh! If I had but chosen death on Hallowe'en! Then his crime would have been discovered—my innocent blood would have cried to heaven for justice, and Margery would have been safe, and Anthony too. Anthony, who loves me—yes, he has told me that it was me he loved! And I could hear the avowal with cold despair, instead of the joy it might have been, and refuse the best good this world could give, because I am unworthy of it. What! marry him I wrong? Have a secret, and such a secret, from my husband? It could not be! But

I am so miserable—so miserable! What shall I do? What will be the end?

A LETTER FROM MISS LANGHAM TO MRS. FRANK LANGHAM.

"DEAR MADAM,—I am sorry to be obliged to request your immediate presence at Maldon. Your charming youngest daughter, whose gaiety and grace had won all our hearts, is very ill. She is suffering from brain fever—caused, I fear, by my own folly; I permitted her to try a foolish charm on Hallowe'en, and your future son-in-law, Mr. O'Halloran, alarmed her by following her in jest.

"The shock to her nerves was so great that she has been dull and indisposed ever since, and is now confined to her bed. Her illness is, of course, serious; but she has youth and great natural strength on her side, and we must hope and put our trust in heaven.

"I think I need scarcely urge your instant coming. Poor Margery forgets her own happiness in attending on her sister. Mr. O'Halloran appears as anxious for her as any of us.

"Believe me, very truly yours,
"MARTHA LANGHAM."

SOPHY RESUMES HER DIARY.

December 24.—The bells are ringing merrily, the fire blazing brightly, mamma sitting with her knitting in the chimney-corner.

I resume my diary once more, with feelings of humble and devout gratitude.

I have been very ill since I wrote last in this volume, and remember nothing of many unrecorded days.

They sent for my mother; she came, and at once installed herself by my bedside.

One night, while she was watching my restless slumbers and listening to my murmured words, she heard me say, "If I die, they will read my diary!" That possibility was the one hope and thought of my lucid intervals; so, in my delirium, I spoke of it.

"Miss Sophy often says that, ma'am," observed the nurse, who sat up with mamma. "Her diary runs a deal in her head."

"Where is it?" asked my mother, a sudden thought darting into her mind. "Go and ask Miss Margery."

Margery had locked my book up at the beginning of my illness—she gave it to the nurse; and my mother, assuming her maternal prerogative, and firmly believing that her Sophy had no secrets from her, opened it, and read from the period of our arrival at Maldon up to the close. Surely my guardian angel smiled beside her as she did so.

The whole secret was plain now. The next morning, almost at day-dawn, my mother sought the rector and confided the tale to him. He came up and saw Miss Langham, then went off and secured a police-inspector at once.

O'Halloran and the footman were taken into custody. O'Halloran fell on his knees and offered to confess everything if Miss Langham would pardon him. Of course she could not.

They are both now enduring penal servitude for life.

It seems that Edward, the footman, was one of a gang of London thieves; who, with a false character, had got himself engaged in Miss Langham's family, for the purpose of robbing the house.

Soon after his arrival, Jervis, the butler, who is a garrulous old man, related to him the family history, and how Mr. Anthony Langham was heir, because Miss Dorothy Langham, a great-niece of Sir Jonathan's, had never been heard of since she ran away with the Irish officer and went to America; nor could they trace her or find that she had left any children, though the lawyers had advertised for them many times. Ned was a genius in his line. The idea occurred to him of supplying an heir to the estate in the O'Halloran family.

He had a nephew who had received a good education at a national school, and might, he thought, pass for the heir. With the aid of a low attorney employed by thieves, a plot was so ably concocted that even Miss Langham's cautious man of business was deceived, and Mr. Corney O'Halloran (the footman's nephew) was received at Maldon Hall as its future possessor.

Doubts had, however, occurred since to the family lawyer, and he had sent a clerk to America to investigate more closely the pretender's claims. Knowledge of this had reached Green, and induced him to come down to Maldon on Hallowe'en, to warn his confederates of their danger, and to advise decisive measures. They—Edward and O'Halloran—had walked out with him, fearing to hold any conversation of importance within the possible hearing of listeners, and on their return homewards, after seeing him on the road to the railway station, they lingered, as I too well know, in the churchyard.

The infamous lawyer found means to escape from the hands of justice; but the two impostors, uncle and

nephew, were already doomed, and suffering their just punishment. Such was the tale my mother told me yesterday; I was not strong enough to hear it in detail before.

Humbly do I thank the Divine Providence which has so mercifully revealed this iniquity before it was too late. For even if it had been discovered by the researches of the lawyer's clerk, the discovery would have come only after Margery's marriage, and would have overwhelmed us all with disgrace. Perhaps O'Halloran had hoped that if he were once a member of the family by marriage, he would not be exposed or punished, even if the trick were found out. But my happy illness and this dear book saved her from such a fate, and she has just now implored me, with tears in her eyes, to forgive her unjust suspicions and angry words. Poor dear Margery! I could only draw her to my bosom and weep over her. How she must suffer! Will she ever recover her mortification and disappointment?

Our mother is a little harsh to her. She declares that Margery is rightly punished for her mercenary view of marriage—for it seems that my sister accepted O'Halloran because he was heir to the property which she had from the first coveted.

It will, it seems, come into our family even now; for Anthony, whose despair at my danger touched my mother, has won from her the second secret of my diary, and refuses to accept the refusal I gave him while I believed my silence so cruelly wronged him.

We are, therefore, to Miss Langham's great joy, betrothed, and are to be married early in the spring.

Anthony has been confessing to-day that he was dreadfully jealous the night he met me with O'Halloran, and he says he should never have asked me to be his wife, had not the impostor made Margery an offer.

How grateful I ought to be to heaven that good has been brought out of the ill and irrelevant folly of sowing hempest upon Hallowe'en! S. L.

CENTENARIES AND COMMEMORATIONS.

I REMEMBER hearing how congregations used to cry at Dean Curwen's sermons. I bought the book, and I vow I almost cried too over the ten-and-sixpence I paid for it; and yet there is no denying the power this man wielded. The scenes his church witnessed, of enthusiastic feeling—of benevolence, exaggerated to a perfect hysterical passion—are not transcended by the records of Mrs. Siddons in "Lady Macbeth." The offertory-plate was filled with brooches, rings, bracelets; whatever of ornament adorned the brow or breast of beauty, was thrown half-frantically to swell the sum that went to assuage the sorrows of wretchedness, or save from destitution the widow and the orphan. Read one of these appeals now, and if it will move you to contribute a sixpence, you must have a heart open as day to melting charity; and yet this was the subject of Grattan's beautiful eulogy—this was he who, in feeding the lamp of charity, exhausted the lamp of life, &c.

Now, we have nothing to induce us to believe that our grandfathers and grandmothers were a soft-hearted generation. From all that we can learn of them, they were pretty much like ourselves. They had the same sort of pomps, vanities, and temptations as we have, and doubtless met them in a spirit like our own. I am willing to admit that they were not worse, but I do not believe that they were better than us. How came it, then, that this preacher, whose eloquence, to our thinking, is anything but impassioned, and whose appeals we can read now as coolly as we can over our "Bradshaw," moved enraptured audiences at his will, and made even those who came to deny his powers remain to testify, by solemn acts of benevolence, to his persuasiveness? Take what is before our eyes at this moment; is there any one bold enough to say that Spurgeon's sermons, to which twenty thousand persons weekly listen in rapt wonder and worship, will some fifty years hence have fifty readers—ay, even five? And not that the man has not power and ability—his success has put that much on record; but that there is a species of power and ability that must come aided by the individuality, and that they who have not witnessed the exercise of these gifts, when so accompanied, are not fair judges of the effect.

We are often wrong, then, in saying that this or that man who achieved a celebrity in some bygone day would not have been distinguished had he lived in our own era. The chances are we should have taken him at the same price as our forefathers did. Let us be slow to disparage the age in which a charlatan was made much of—not only because there never yet was a time without such examples, but also because the charlatan was undeniably a cleverer fellow than we are willing to believe him. There are, however, now and then instances of men so transcendently great, that what they have done remains an authority for future ages, and becomes an eternal possession to the land that bore them. These men, if

they be writers, imbue the language with their own genius, enriching the humblest who talks with the bright flashes of their soul, the charming vagrancies of their fancy, and the heart-stirring eloquence of their passion. Such men commemorate themselves. What can you do for them?—how exalt them, how honour them? Let your homage take what shape it will, it must ever be in its proportions absurdly unequal to the object of its devotion. A statue has its meaning, certainly, but beyond that we can do nothing. Of the success of commemoration festivals, processions, concerts, monster dinners, brass bands, and brass orators, let that sad spectacle in honour of Shakespeare testify.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

THE STEPMOTHER.

CHAPTER XLII.

Am I then so poor,
That I no longer can indemnify
My servants? If 'tis your belief
That fortune has fled from me—go! forsake me!
Wallenstein.

JERRY STROPE was in his wife's chamber, taking luncheon, with the air of a lord. The lower floor of the house had been cleared of its furniture, and the rest was being carried away as fast as possible by the second-hand furniture dealer. During the whole morning, Jerry had been labouring assiduously to "realize" on all the movables of the stately mansion, and he now stirred up the money in his capacious pockets, as he muttered:

"Things are a workin'. I've come out a leetle 'head o' Dolly, arter all. I've sold her jewellry, laces, gowns, cleared out the carpets, the chairs, the dishes, the silver, an' made a pile o' money gin'rally. She played smart on me six years ago, an' it's my turn now! She's got to come down off her high horse, an' she'll hev ter begin agin'!"

He chuckled with satisfaction at the state of things he had achieved, and poured down an additional glass of wine.

He was engaged in taking another, when Mrs. Willis' carriage drove up, and his wife alighted, coming into the house in a spiritless manner that immediately excited his attention.

"Somethin's up," he ejaculated, as she entered the room. "What's gone wrong?"

"Nothing—everything!" was the reply. "Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

Mrs. Willis sank into a chair with a groan.

Her husband had not time to address her another question, the door flying open and the whole retinue of servants filing in.

"Please, ma'am," said the coachman, acting as spokesman for the party, "we wants our pay immediately. We don't understand such carryings on as we've seen here in the last twenty-four hours."

Mrs. Willis groaned again, and counted out their pay, completely emptying her purse.

"Take the horse and carriage to the stable," she commanded, "and then clear out, all of you."

The servants retreated, and Mrs. Willis said:

"Give me some money, Jerry. You've sold the furniture, you know!"

"Can't help that," returned her husband. "I'm gwine to sell the hosses and carriage, too; but that ain't no sign I'm gwine to squander my little savins. I take keer o' myself, you take keer o' yourself. I call that fair!"

His wife cried out angrily, and sprang from her seat; but further demonstrations were prevented by the ringing of the door-bell, which she herself answered, admitting Pierre Russell.

"Well, things have changed," said Russell, following his aunt up-stairs. "You look like a ruin here. Seen anything more of Esther?"

"No; and I don't want to. Nor of you either!"

"You'll see a little more of me," said Russell, bitterly. "Where's Jerry?"

Mrs. Strope looked around; and seeing nothing of her husband, rightly concluded that he had retired to the adjoining bed-room.

"He can take care of himself," she said. "Go away!"

"I will in a moment. Permit me to console with you on the failure of your schemes. I saw Elinor at a hotel, and she told me she had flung you off. And as for Jerry, I have informed against him to the police, and they'll be here in ten minutes to arrest him for burglary and manslaughter."

As he heard these words, Jerry rushed from his concealment, exclaiming:

"Well, I'll settle up my little debt before I go, then!"

He sprang upon Pierre, and they clutched and fought desperately, retreating into the hall, at the same moment that several officers entered the front door, left ajar by Russell for that purpose.

Too much blinded by rage to notice their entrance,

and infuriated by Pierre's desperate blows, Jerry caught up his antagonist, and threw him over the banisters upon the marble flooring of the lower hall, where he was instantly picked up—dead! His neck had been broken.

The officers rushed upon Jerry, who made a desperate resistance, but was soon captured and ironed.

Before he could be removed, however, Harry Moreland and Mr. Sutton entered the dwelling, and paused aghast before the corpse of Pierre Russell.

"Dead!" exclaimed Moreland.

"Retribution has overtaken him," said the clergyman. "Verily, the wages of sin is death."

He had been to Russell's house; and getting no trace of Esther, had called upon Harry to help to look for her. Both had come to Mrs. Willis at this timely moment, to see if she knew aught of Esther's whereabouts.

As soon as he could realize the death of the arch-plotter who had so deeply wronged him, Harry led the way up-stairs, where Mrs. Willis was crouching in deadly fear, and asked her if she knew where her step-daughter was.

"I neither know nor care," was the reply of the wicked woman, true to the last to her false instincts. "You may find her where you can. You may find her where you can, and no thanks to me."

"Poor child!" ejaculated Mr. Sutton, on hearing this response. "Her fate is still a terrible mystery to us. Where shall we go? What shall we do?"

At this juncture, Mr. Lawrence and Kayder came up the stairs, the former exclaiming:

"Oh, there you are, Mr. Moreland. It is well that you told me where your search was likely to lead you, for there's a queer sort of messenger"—and he indicated Kayder—"in an awful hurry to see you. It seems that his master has found the young lady, the very person you want, and that your instant presence is demanded."

He paused, his voice being actually drowned by the joyful exclamations of the clergyman and Harry Moreland, to say nothing of Kayder.

"Truly, we are overwhelmed with blessings when we least expected them," said Mr. Sutton, when the little party had recovered a fair degree of calmness. "You can leave with the messenger at once, Mr. Moreland, while I say a few words to your partner and the others!"

As Harry left the tragic scene, he saw Mr. and Mrs. Strope taken away to prison.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Turn not thine eyes upon the backward view,
Let us look forward into sunny days.
Welcome with joyous hearts the victory—
Forget what it has cost thee. Schiller.

For a long time the efforts of Mr. Moreland to induce Esther to look upon the bright side and cherish hope were unsuccessful; but at length the poor girl regained her self-possession.

"You will think me ungrateful, Mr. Moreland," she faltered; "but, oh, there's such a gulf between Harry and me!"

"There shan't be one long," said Mr. Moreland, wiping his eyes, "not if money can bridge it by getting a divorce. And don't call me Mr. Moreland, either. Your father was a father to my boy, and I'll be a father to his orphan girl. Oh, why don't Kayder come? I wish I'd gone myself. What does a Hindoo know of a father's affection? Does the rascal think I can stand this suspense long?"

"But you know," said Esther, "you didn't tell the servant that Harry was your son!"

"Ah! true enough; but then I told him to hurry, and Kayder knows that hurry with me means run and jump. Tell me more about my boy. Tell me some more of the noble deeds he has done!"

Esther proceeded to do so, and the hours wore away, Mr. Moreland continually on the alert to hear the sound of the bell when it should ring, and giving various orders for a splendid dinner.

At length, early in the afternoon, the bell sounded.

"Oh, I can't go—I can't!" said Mr. Moreland, sinking helplessly into a chair. "I'm overcome at the thought of seeing my son. But I don't believe Kayder found him. More likely he's dead. I presume he's bringing in Harry's dead body!"

While Mr. Moreland was thus incoherently muttering, his servant had gone to the door, and now entered the library, saying:

"Your excellency, Kayder has brought him!"

At the same moment, Kayder ushered in Harry Moreland, and his father arose tremblingly and confronted him, looking earnestly and steadily at each one of his noble features with strong emotion.

"Harry Moreland?" he said, in tremulous tones.

"I am Harry Moreland," responded our hero, feeling a strange thrill at his heart as he regarded his host. "Your servant said Miss Willis—"

"Harry!" interrupted his father, with choking tears

and a sudden cry of joy; "Harry, you are my own son, and I am your father, from India! Oh, my son!"

He sprang forward, clasping Harry in a close embrace, and they mingled their glad tears together.

Our hero had had no intimation of the person he was to meet, but he readily received the joyous truth, and poured out his lifelong yearnings in his embraces of the father he had never before seen.

Esther and Kayder both wept in sympathy with the strangely-united father and son.

"And now let me look at you again," said Mr. Moreland, huskily; removing his son's arms and regarding his manly face. "How happy I am! I never knew till to-day that you lived!"

As soon as their greetings were over, and something like calmness restored, Mr. Moreland continued: "See here, my boy; haven't you any word for Esther?"

He led his son to Esther, Harry not having seen her before; but the maiden shrank from Harry's proffered hand, whispering:

"Oh, you don't know!"

"I do know," said her lover, gravely, and with infinite tenderness, as he drew her to his breast. "We have been wronged; but all is now clear. Esther, my precious darling, there is no gulf between us now. Pierre Russell is dead!"

Esther uttered a wild cry of joy, and fainted.

"Hurrah!" cried Mr. Moreland, running for his medicine-chest. "He's dead! he's dead! Kayder, give her some drops to restore her. I presume that creature told him I was after him. Do something for her, Kayder. He knew he couldn't do anything against me. Kayder, why on earth—"

Mr. Moreland paused, seeing that the care-ess of his son had been more efficacious in Esther's case than the drops would have been.

"And now you'll be married," he continued, striving to subdue his excitement; "and everything will be all right. Russell didn't have time to publish his marriage; in fact, it went no further than the ceremony, and was no marriage at all. We'll repudiate it, ignore it, and you'll be married; and I shall be no longer a selfish old cynic, but a man with a family—a son and daughter. What do you say?"

Esther and Harry assented with joy.

"Kayder, you rascal!" said his master, struck by a sudden thought, "and where Dr. Sutton lives, and rush after him. Bring him up here at once. The marriage is to take place immediately."

Harry gave the Hindoo the address, and he went on his errand, soon returning with Mr. Sutton.

The marriage ceremony was quickly performed, and the last vestige of Esther's troubles vanished when she was clasped in the arms of her true husband.

The next day, Mr. Moreland persuaded his son to retire from business altogether, as well as from the firm of Lawrence and Co., leaving his place open for some one more deeply in need of it. He settled upon Harry and his bride half of his East Indian millions, and declared them the heirs of the other half.

Esther's fortune was recovered under the last will, with the exception of the sums squandered by the Strope and Russell, and her portion in life became far brighter than her father could have reasonably hoped for her, the night of darkness through which she had passed tending to make her day the more glorious!

Jerry Strope was duly tried, on a charge of manslaughter, and was sentenced to prison for a long term of years, or for life—we are not quite certain which. His wife was restored to her freedom, after a long and weary detention, and descended rapidly to the ignoble obscurity from which she had emerged. While living in a miserable and crowded locality, a year after her release, she was seized with a malady which destroyed all her pretensions to a handsome face and form, and left her disfigured, decrepit, and a loathsome specimen of humanity. She then sank still lower, and may now be often seen—a premature and repulsive old woman—selling apples in the thoroughfares.

As her fate was a just punishment, so was her daughter's.

Elinor, under her assumed name, and by giving herself out as an heiress, entrapped a dissolute foreigner, stopping at the same hotel, into a speedy marriage, and went home with him, where for a time all went on smoothly; then abandonment and destitution, and finally all trace of her was lost.

As to Harry and Esther, they reside at their beautiful villa on the Thames in the summer, and spend their winters at a beautiful house in town, moving in the most refined and agreeable society. They are blessed with two charming children, a boy and a girl, which are the pride of their doting grandfather and the faithful Kayder. And so, having come out of much tribulation into a sphere of affection and usefulness, they are journeying down the stream of life pleasantly; and we will leave them to their well-merited happiness.

THE END.

KING RICHARD III.'S BEDSTEAD.—The following letter has been addressed to a contemporary, which speaks of the bed of King Richard (slept in on the night before the battle of Bosworth) being in the possession of Sir Richard Roe, who had recently bought the great bed of Ware. This is certainly a mistake, as the bedstead of that tyrant is in the possession of the owner of Beaumanor Park, in Leicestershire, and stands in a room of that fine mansion, which some years ago was fitted up in perfect accordance with the style of the period in which that monarch lived. The bedstead belonged to the family of the Drakes, who kept the Blue Boar (the King's Arms) in Leicester at the time of Richard's death and for many years afterwards; and it was at this house where a large quantity of gold, which the King had secreted in hidden drawers of the bedstead, was stolen from it. The robbers were discovered a few years afterwards, and executed at Leicester. From the Blue Boar, it went into the family of Batington, of the Temple, in that county, and remained there for more than two hundred years, from whence it was removed to Beaumanor Park. The bedstead is a very handsome specimen of oak carving of that day, and highly interesting to the numerous visitors of the hospitable mansion of Beaumanor.

THE STRANGE SAILOR.

BUT a few years have passed since the events we are about to record took place. It was towards noon that the brig *Sophia* hauled out from one of the numerous slips which lay upon the side of the river. She was half an hour behind the time at which Captain Gordon had intended to have sailed, for she had been waiting for the last man to make up her complement; and now that he had come, the brig was soon standing out for New Orleans, with not only a valuable cargo of merchandise on board, but also taking out a large amount of specie for a mercantile house in the latter city.

Most of the men who were now on board the brig had served with Captain Gordon for several years; for they were attached to the captain on account of his many good qualities, and he was no less attached to them for their orderly conduct and superior seamanship.

The last man who shipped gave his name as John Doughty; and although there was a peculiarity about his countenance which was not likely to strike the beholder with a favourable opinion at first sight, still he was a superior seaman, thorough navigator, and well calculated to perform all the duties that might be required of him.

He was a powerfully-built fellow, and the captain thought himself most fortunate in having secured the services of so able a man.

There was one man, however, on board the vessel, who had considerable doubts upon the subject of this John Doughty's honesty. Sam Denton was an old sailor who had been knocked about upon the sea for over forty years; and during that time he had fallen into all kinds of company, and had scraped an acquaintance with rogues and villains, in all their different spheres of operation. The moment Sam set his eye upon this new man, he was forcibly impressed with the idea that he had seen him somewhere before; but, for the life of him, he could not tell where.

For two or three days the old man kept a strict watch over the movements of the strange sailor; and the more he watched, the more he became impressed with the conviction that he had seen him under circumstances rather unfavourable to his character. And the man's movements, too, to a person who was scrutinizing them with suspicious eyes, were somewhat calculated to strengthen these convictions. At length the old man determined to open some sort of communication with him, in order, if possible, to draw the fellow out; and accordingly, he approached the binnacle, where Doughty sat, and taking a seat by the side of him, he remarked:

"I say, shipmate, haven't you and I sailed together before?"

The man thus addressed slightly started as he heard the question, and gazing for a moment into the face of the old man, he replied:

"Not that I know of; but why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing—only I thought your face looked kind of nat'ral."

"Well, p'raps you have seen me before, but hang me if I ever saw you before I came aboard this brig."

Sam had not failed to notice that his companion evinced a slight uneasiness while being thus questioned, and his suspicions were more aroused than ever. After giving another look at the countenance of the man before him, he said:

"Well, it may be that I'm mistaken; but I'd have bet a week's allowance o' grog, when I first saw you coming over the gangway, that I knew the cut of your jib. Howsumever, if it should happen that I've got

your figure-head stowed away up here—" placing his finger upon the top of his head, "I shall be pretty sure to overhaul it before long."

"By the Great Immortal!" exclaimed Doughty, as he started at his companion's last remark, "one would think that I was some villain."

"Oh, no; I thought no such thing," hastily replied Sam, as he arose from the binnacle; "but you know one likes to scrape up old acquaintances when he can. Howsumever, it's my turn at the wheel now."

So saying, the old man walked aft, and took the wheel, while the other sat still upon the binnacle, and seemed to be dwelling on something that was far from pleasant.

"By the Great Immortal!" muttered old Denton to himself, as he threw the wheel a couple of spokes a-weather, "I have certainly heard that before. Ah—"

"Luff, luff," shouted the captain, who happened to be on the quarter-deck. "You'll have her off before the wind if you ain't careful."

"I have it—I have it!" murmured the old man to himself, as a quick gleam of satisfaction passed over his features, while he gave the old brig three spokes of lee helm. "I know him now—the scamp."

"What is that you say, Sam?" exclaimed the captain, as he came aft. "I thought it was one of the green hands."

"I don't wonder you thought so," replied the old man, in a tone that savoured somewhat of shame.

"Why, you've had the old craft veering and hauling here and there like a weather-cock."

"I know it, sir; and as soon as I am relieved, I'll come into the cabin, and tell you all about it. It's quite a yarn, sir."

"Something new, Sam?"

"You'll think so, sir."

"Keep away—keep away."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Why, you throw the wheel up as though you calculated to lay her over," remarked the captain in a tone of astonishment, as he saw his favourite seaman give half a turn of the wheel, when a single spoke would have been sufficient.

"Blow me if I can steer at all, sir," replied the old sailor, as he brought the helm to leeward again. "It's no use. Send somebody to relieve me, sir, and I should like to tell you a bit of a yarn."

In a few moments Sam was relieved, and he followed Captain Gordon to the cabin.

"Now, Sam, what have you got to tell?" asked the captain, as they both took a seat upon a long chest.

"It's something of a story," replied the old man, "but I guess 'twill interest you, specially the last part of it."

"Go ahead."

"Well, sir, just about ten years ago—let's see—I've been with you nine years, ain't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, ten years ago I was first mate of a small brig which sailed for Havana. One morning, just after the morning-watch had been set, while we were in sight of the Bahamas, a small, rakish-looking craft was made out, which had just hove in sight round Cat Island. This island was dead to windward of us; and when the sail was first reported we took but little notice of it, as there are always a lot of those small fellows cruising about among those islands. The wind was blowing fresh at that time from south'rd and east'rd, and we had it on the quarter, for we had been driven some way out of our course. Nothing more was thought of the stranger till one of the men, who had been sent up into the maintopmast-cross-trees with a glass, reported that her deck was full of men. For the first time we began to suspect danger, and accordingly set a watch on the stranger. She was a schooner; and as she was built purposely for sailing, she overhauled us pretty fast. At length we sent studd's sails aloft, and for a few minutes I thought we were gaining. But I was mistaken, for in less than an hour she was so near we could almost count her men with the naked eye, and in a moment more she ran up the 'black flag.'"

"The next thing we knew was the passing call of an eighteen-pound shot, which came whizzing through the rigging, but without doing any damage."

"Rather than take any more such compliments, we brought our vessel up to the wind and hove to, all feeling sure that there would be no use in fighting against such numbers."

"We quietly waited for the pirates to come alongside, and we thought that they might have some mercy if we put them to no trouble."

"They did come, the scamps, and you may be sure they made themselves perfectly at home with our cargo; but there wasn't much that they wanted, and after carousing and swearing because we had no money, they resolved to leave us alone. But before they went, their captain, who was as ugly a looking fellow as you ever saw, gave orders for scuttling and setting fire to the brig."

"There were only seven of us, all told; and the pirates numbered over fifty, so that it took but a few minutes to lash us to the rigging, and in five minutes more they had bored half-a-dozen holes in her bottom, and set fire in the hold; then, giving a yell like a pack of wolves, they jumped aboard their own craft, and casting off their grapplings, they swung round and stood off to the north'rd."

"As luck would have it, the cook, who was a regular Congo, had secreted himself as soon as the pirates came alongside, and he had not been discovered; and by his help we were all of us cast loose, and we managed to plug up the holes and put out the fire before much damage was done. In fifteen hours from that time we were anchored in Havana, and a brig-of-war was sent after the pirate."

"Well," said the captain, who had listened attentively to this yarn.

"Well, that pirate wasn't caught."

"Well, what next?"

"That pirate, captain, is on board your brig!"

"On board my brig?" reiterated Captain Gordon, springing from the chest and seizing a pair of pistols which hung over his cot.

"Yes—and he's up to some game, too."

"Very likely—but I guess he won't do much. We must keep a watch over him, however, and we mustn't let him know it, neither, for he must be alone, and we can easily trap him when we get into the port."

Captain Gordon had the most perfect confidence in the rest of his men; and to those in whose judgment he could rely he communicated the facts already known to the reader; and from that time forward, the strictest watch was kept upon the movements of the suspected man, without his being aware of it.

The brig was to touch at Key West; and in three days after the captain became aware of the character of Doughty, some of those numerous reefs and keys which render the southern portion of the Florida islands so difficult of navigation were discovered to be not far distant; and as it was near night, the captain gave orders for the most vigilant watch.

About midnight, one of the men on the look-out reported a light on the lee-bow, and in a few moments the captain was on deck.

After getting the bearings of the light, he went below to examine his chart; but the light could not be accounted for, and again he came on deck to take another observation.

"That's Newcastle, sir."

Captain Gordon turned towards the speaker, and beheld John Doughty.

"Newcastle!" exclaimed he, as apprehension of a plot shot across his mind; "that is more than fifty miles to the south'rd and west'rd."

"So I thought, sir; but that is the light, I am confident. We've made more headway against the stream than you imagined."

"Then we might keep away a little."

"Yes, sir, certainly," replied Doughty.

Captain Gordon watched the speaker's countenance narrowly, and he was startled by the strange light that flashed from his eyes as he made this answer.

At this moment the clouds, which had been hanging in heavy masses over the horizon and mantling the whole arch with their sable garb, began to lift; and as the dim light of the released stars began to relieve the gloom, the look-out forward sang out:

"Land ho!"

"The deuce!" shouted Captain Gordon, as he seized a night glass and sprang forward with energy.

"Where is it?"

"Right there, sir," replied the look-out, pointing off a couple of points upon the lee-bow.

Sure enough—there, within a quarter of a mile, extended all along, a low, black shore.

"Ready about!" shouted the captain, as he sprang back upon the quarter-deck.

"Who's that going aloft?" he continued, as he observed a dark form stealthily creeping up the rigging, under cover of the shade of the main-sail.

"It's Doughty, sir," replied one of the men in the lee gangway.

"Come down out of that, or by heavens I'll shoot you."

In a moment the man stood upon the deck, and in another moment the brig's main-yards were hauled. Soon the sails were braced round, and the vessel stood off on the other track.

"That's something I can't make out," said the captain, to old Sam, as all was taut on the other tack. "Are you sure that the brig has been kept anywhere near her course during the night?"

"Yes, sir," replied Sam. "She has been heading sou'-west-by-south ever since the first watch was set."

"Who had the wheel at the last dog-watch?"

"Doughty, sir."

"Even if he had kept her—"

"Thunder and lightning! what's that?" exclaimed one of the men who stood near the wheel.

"What?" quickly asked the captain.

"Why—there!"

Captain Gordon looked in the direction pointed out, and then he went and looked at the compass. Three or four times did he thus gaze, alternately at the object pointed out and at the compass. At length, while a peculiar shade passed over his trembling features, he exclaimed:

"By heavens, it's the North Star!"

Half-a-dozen men sprang to the binnacle and looked at the compass. That compass pointed four and a half points to the eastward of the star.

In a moment the binnacle was opened—the box taken out and opened, and the card raised from its point. The needle had been raised from the paper index and the card twisted round so as to throw the north pole of the index four points and a half to the eastward of the needle.

"Death and curses!" shouted the captain as he saw this. "We're being sailing due west all night."

"Then I know where we were when that land was reported," said Sam Denton, after a few moments' thought.

"And where was it?"

"Within half a mile of the most graceless band of wreckers that ever watched a struggling ship."

"And don't you know who altered that compass?" asked the captain.

"Know? To be sure I do," replied Sam, as he cast a side glance at the gangway, where stood John Doughty; "and the sooner you put Jack Doughty in irons, the better."

"Just my opinion," replied the captain; and calling upon four of his trusted men, he started forward to the spot where Doughty stood, and laying his left hand upon his shoulder, while with the right he held a cocked pistol to his head, he said:

"John Doughty, you are a prisoner."

"A prisoner!" exclaimed the villain, starting back, and drawing a pistol.

But before he could use it, a well-directed blow knocked his arm powerless to his side, and he was soon securely bound and confined in the long-boat, which was housed over sufficiently to protect him from the weather.

As soon as the desperado was secured, his chest was broken open and his papers overhauled. Then Captain Gordon found himself in possession of a prize he had little anticipated. His prisoner was no less a personage than Marl Martin, the notorious Pirate Wrecker of the Florida Keys.

As soon as this fact was discovered, the brig's head was put for Havana, and there Captain Gordon delivered up his prisoner and received the heavy amount which had been offered as a reward for his apprehension. Sam Denton received one-half the sum, and the other men were not forgotten by the ship-owners who had been thus relieved of their direst enemy.

Two large ships had been decoyed by Marl Martin into the destruction he had plotted for the brig. They had been taken by the wily scoundrel into the toils, and under cover of the clouds he had given them a false compass, and by its lying points had they been led to the merciless bars and rocks.

But he tried it once too often, and old Sam Denton (he's dead now—bless his memory!) had the credit of giving up to justice the dreaded Pirate Wrecker.

A. C. B.

SIBYL LEE.

CHAPTER XVI.

She, too, led by Fate,
Could taste no sweets of youth's desired age,
But found her life too true a pilgrimage.

Dryden.

With a heavy heart, little Katy had left London and started for her country home. The day of the tragedienne's visit to the inn where they were sojourning, when her father came up-stairs, she said, in a low, tremulous tone:

"Miss Edgecombe has been here."

"How do you know, child?" asked Oliver.

"I heard her voice, and saw her from my window when she went away; I knew she could not rest till she found out what had become of me."

"Ah! she professes to feel great interest in you, and has offered to adopt you."

"And what did you tell her?" and the child's breath came quick, and an eager look shot into her eyes.

"I declined it, Fan," said her father, proudly.

"And where is she, papa?"

"Gone—you will never see her more."

A low cry broke from the little girl as she inquired:

"Why did she not bid me good-bye—why not give me a parting kiss, if she thought so much of me?"

"That honour I declined, too," rejoined her father,

with such bitterness that Katy was astonished and shocked.

"Indeed! it was very cruel of you," she observed, while her tears fell fast.

"I do not like this meddling with my affairs," said Mr. Oliver; "and, by heaven, I'll put a stop to it! Forget her, little Fan—your separation must be lifelong."

The child sank at his feet; and with sobs and prayers, which would have melted an ordinary nature, tried to shake his purpose, but in vain—as he had said in his interview with her, where Agnes Edgecombe was concerned he was adamant! Even before the tragedienne departed for the continent, the Olivers were on their way; and, after a fatiguing journey, reached their destination.

"That is our home," observed her father, pointing at the rudest of cottages, where not another was to be seen.

Katy gazed at it in silence, and Mr. Oliver continued:

"Do you like it, little Fan?"

"I like the grass and the flowers; but it seems a lonely place."

"I acknowledge that it does not swarm with life like a large town; but you will be content?"

"I hope so, papa," murmured the child; but in secret she was yearning for the genial sympathy she had found in the great tragedienne.

On entering the cottage, they were welcomed by a short, slender, dark-eyed woman. She greeted Mr. Oliver as respectfully as if he had been a nobleman and she one of the humblest of his retainers, and then he said:

"This is my little Fan, Rachel."

Rachel dropped a stiff, old-fashioned curtsy, and, with shy grace, Katy held out her hand, exclaiming:

"I am glad to see you, Rachel—glad that I am not to be quite alone."

The woman smiled; and advancing, turned the child's face toward her, and searched it long and eagerly.

"She's an Oliver, sir; a real Oliver," she observed; "she looks like the portraits that used to hang on the walls of the old place; but I daresay you are tired and hungry, and I'll have supper on the table in a twinkling."

The meal was soon provided, and Katy retired to the dim chamber overhead, where she was to sleep.

Rachel removed the tea things, swept the floor, and was about to leave the kitchen, when her master said, in a tone scarcely above a whisper:

"Stop, stop! Can you be trusted as of old, Rachel?"

"Yes, sir; indeed I can. There is something on your mind, and I saw it the moment I set my eyes upon you."

"During my stay in London, I met Catherine—not Catherine the child, simply; but Catherine the woman, Rachel."

"Oh, sir, I thought she was dead!" exclaimed Rachel.

"There was a time when that was my belief; but within a year I have been satisfied she was living."

"And is she still an actress?"

"Yes, passing under the name of Agnes Edgecombe. This winter she has been playing at the Theatre, and she crossed my path once more."

"Tell me all—all," cried Rachel; "I did not dream you would ever meet again."

"As I told you before, I left Fan decently provided for, as I thought, with her aunt; but sickness wasted their means, and when she died, a man named Wait, a rough but kindly-disposed fellow, took the child home. Chancing to get a glimpse of Catherine, when she came to rehearsal, and feeling a strange interest in her, she stole into the theatre, hid in a box, and watched the play as it progressed. When Catherine disappeared, she fell asleep; and waking when the theatre was quite deserted, her sobs attracted the attention of the actress, who was still in the green-room. What Catherine thought at meeting her I cannot tell; but she learned her simple story, and became her fast friend. She removed her to more comfortable lodgings; provided a nurse for her when she was attacked with the typhus fever; and when she herself was prostrated with the same disease, Fan could not be prevailed upon to leave her."

"Oh! how strange your story sounds!—like a romance, sir."

"Say rather a stern reality," replied Oliver. "At the tragedienne's residence, a handsome suburban villa, I found my child. Catherine had gone out for a drive; and though she begged to be allowed to remain till Miss Edgecombe should come back, I steadily refused. Catherine followed me to the inn to which I had borne little Fan, and employing all her tragic airs, endeavoured to gain possession of her; but I denied her even a parting word."

Rachel was silent, and he went on:

"I have placed wearisome leagues between them; and she will never find us here. If you are to stay with me, Rachel, you must promise me one thing."

"What is it, sir?"

"Never to speak of these things to my child till I give you permission."

"I promise you," said the woman, meekly; and a few moments later they separated.

When Raymond Oliver was alone, he drew a casket from a writing-desk, which was a remnant of more prosperous days; and fitting a small key into the lock, raised the lid.

There lay a miniature, painted on ivory, and with artistic skill; a tress of hair; and a little volume of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, bound in purple and gold.

Oliver seized them; and, without a regretful glance, flung one after the other into the fire, muttering:

"Thus perish all memorials of Catherine Ethridge!"

On the very night when this scene was being enacted in that cottage, Agnes Edgecombe stood on the deck of a steamer.

During the passage, she had lived over, again and again, the varied events of her engagement in London; her meeting with the ragged, barefoot child in the theatre; her recognition of and visit to Lillian Ethridge; Lawrence Ashburton's generous offer; her own illness; the friends who had gathered round her; and the loss of little Katy. Memories, which had long slumbered, awoke, and stirred her lonely, despairing heart; her soul hungered and thirsted for the child from whom Raymond Oliver had driven her.

Unlike most women, she shunned the gaiety and glitter of Paris; but the country, with its gray churches, convents, and chateaux—its vineyards and olive groves, its brown vintagers and shepherds—had a novel charm for her. She sailed up the Rhine, enjoying the far-famed scenery along its banks; she trod the passes of the Pyrenees, listened to the songs of the Tyrol, watched the white splendours of Alpine glaciers, traced the path of the avalanche, and sat down to rest in the chalets of the Swiss mountaineers. But the longer she travelled, the more keenly she felt her utter isolation, and, weary and heart-sick, she reached Bordeaux. And yet she was not quite alone; her old friend, the manager, to whom she had before referred, and his daughter, whom he intended for the stage, were the companions of her tour, and thus no care or responsibility devolved upon her.

Had it not been for that winter's experience in London, and the new ties which had aroused her sympathy, she would have been as cold and apathetic as a woman actuated only by galvanic life. Rumbling through the streets of Bordeaux in the diligence, drawn by four horses, she dreamily gazed at the rough, narrow pavements; the quaint houses with their pointed gables, projecting eaves, and hanging balconies; and the Gothic churches, with their carved pinnacles gleaming in the sunshine. With some difficulty, she alighted from the diligence at a hotel, and followed the polite waiter through the long, cool galleries. A glass of claret revived her, and she drew her chair to the window, and looked forth on a square, which, with its fountain, and statues, and orange shrubs formed a pleasant picture. At length a diligence drove up, and a gentleman sprang to the ground. There was no mistaking that face—it was Lawrence Ashburton!

Agnes Edgecombe grew giddy, and her breath came in sudden gasps, while the dews of anguish gathered on her broad white brow.

"A friend, Miss Edgecombe," observed the manager, opening the door; and the young man was again at the tragedienne's feet.

"Agnes! Agnes!" he exclaimed, "have you no word of welcome for me? I have followed you over land and sea!"

"Oh! Mr. Ashburton, it was wrong," said the lady. "It is better that we should be separated, when there is no hope for your love."

"No hope! Do you still say that, Agnes?"

"Yes," rejoined the actress; "if I had reason to assure you of this when we last met, I most assuredly have to-day."

And she sank back in her chair, faint and despairing. For a time she sat thus, motionless and silent; but finally she looked up, murmuring:

"Leave me—leave me!"

"Have I offended you, that you should banish me?"

"No; but it is hard for a woman to refuse a love like yours; and I beg of you never again to give me the necessity."

"Dear, dear Agnes, I obey you; I would not add a feather's weight to the burden which lies upon you. My life—my love—farewell!"

For an instant he gazed into her face, and then, touching his lips to her hand, turned away. An hour afterward he had quitted Bordeaux.

From the time of their unexpected meeting, a change

was visible in the great tragedienne. She could not bear solitude or idleness; and when the manager of a London theatre offered her an engagement, she unhesitatingly accepted it.

In Paris she resumed her studies, under one of the best elocutionists, replenished her stage wardrobe, and early in the autumn crossed the channel for England.

Amidst all her trials, her heart had not found the strength and consolation which God gives in answer to prayer; and, in a bitter mood, she muttered:

"Since love is denied me, I will have fame. If I cannot win happiness, I will bask in the homage due to genius; and no tragedienne shall wear greener laurels than Agnes Edgcomb!"

CHAPTER XVII

What hinders then but that you find her out,
And hurry her away by friendly force?

Cato: A Tragedy.

With a pale face, and an unsteady step, Margaret Harding threaded the streets of metropolis. Pausing at the elegant residence of the late Mr. Lee, she rang the bell. After several violent peals, the housekeeper appeared, and Miss Harding inquired for her mistress.

"She ain't here, ma'am. She's been at her country house at the sea-side these three weeks."

Full well Margaret Harding knew the different estates owned by the merchant-prince, and she bent her steps to a villa, built in the Italian style, and commanding a fine view of the sea. Grounds that would have brought dreams of fairyland swept almost to the beach, and pleasure-boats lay rocking on the waters hard by.

Mrs. Lee was expecting a party to dine, and she was taking a last survey of the dining-room and the airy splendour of the drawing-room, when a servant ushered in a woman, whom, in spite of her self-possession, she always dreaded to meet.

"Margaret Harding!" she exclaimed; "I know not why you should thus force yourself upon me."

"That is false," replied Margaret, bitterly; "your whole life is a falsehood. You more than suspect the errand which has brought me here to-day."

"Perhaps," observed Mrs. Lee, "you wish to renew your foolish persecution about the property which, according to your talk, belongs to Alice Hunt."

"No; it is not my purpose now to talk of Alice's claims to your late husband's wealth; but to demand that you should tell me what you know of her mysterious disappearance, for I believe you have had a hand in it. Rich as you are, you would be proud to ensure Edward Stanley; and to advance your own selfish interests, have estranged them."

"Hush, hush! Poverty and misfortune have turned your brain. You are, as the Scotch say, 'clean daft.' Alice Hunt's disappearance is as much a mystery to me as it is to you."

"Sibyl! remember we are both standing in the presence of a just God! the hour will come when I shall see whether you have spoken falsely. I shall continue my search; if Alice is in the world, I shall find her, and bring her back."

Mrs. Lee's eyes glittered; and with a few stern words, she led Margaret Harding to the door, watched her till she disappeared, then swept into the parlour to admire the effect of her white crape robe, with its folds of black satin, the arrangement of her magnificent hair, and the tea-roses on her breast.

"There is but one thing more for me to do," soliloquized Margaret Harding. "Bertha St. John was an intimate friend of Alice; and it may be that she can throw some light upon her fate."

It was late when her tall figure stood at the door of the mansion where Alice had found a shelter; Bertha was still reading in her chamber, and hastened to meet the weary guest.

"Margaret Harding!" she exclaimed, as her glance fell on that troubled face—"oh! Margaret!"

"Alice, Alice," faltered the woman. "Can you tell me anything about my lost Alice?"

"Yes; to you I will reveal what I would to no other."

"Is she living?"

"Yes, yes; but she was wretched at the thought of Mr. Stanley's inconstancy, and she fled from school. She was too proud to speak to Dora, but she went to your old home in Westminster, and finding you absent, came to me. She told me her story—"

"Ah! her story!" interposed Margaret Harding; "that is what I long to hear."

"It seems," continued Bertha, "that there was a great deal of gossip about him and Mrs. Lee—gossip which reached Alice's ears, and aroused doubts with regard to Mr. Stanley. Besides, he did not visit her at the usual time, and no letter assigned the reason; and these circumstances confirmed her suspicions. She left the seminary in secret, and walked to London, resolved to trust nothing but the evidences of her own senses; and concealing herself near Mrs. Lee's, saw him enter. Rumour asserted that he spent most of

his evenings with her, and this Alice deemed proof positive. She declared she would not accept anything more from his hands, and must once more earn her bread."

"Poor girl! poor girl!" moaned Margaret Harding; and Bertha resumed:

"I offered to share my small fortunes with her."

"How kind of you, Miss St. John! With my latest breath I will bless you!"

"She would not take what I offered, however; she preferred independence, and thought work would be better than idleness. I procured her a situation with my sister, as governess; and there she now is, or was when I last heard from Mrs. Lennard."

"I was sure," exclaimed Margaret Harding, "that Sibyl Lee must have had a hand in the desperate game which has been played upon Alice, and the dear child's statements prove it to me beyond the shadow of a doubt. I have just come from her country residence; and though she denied all knowledge of Alice Hunt's fate, I told her I could not trust her. I believe she intercepted the letter my poor girl was expecting; for Edward Stanley, though he has been Mrs. Lee's dupe in some respects, is true to Alice!"

"Are you sure of it, Margaret?"

"Perfectly sure—I have read human nature long, and well. When Madame Berniere apprised him of her disappearance, he was half-wild; and after a thorough search in London and Newton, travelled to Hampshire, where I was staying, to ascertain if she had followed me. People had reported that she had eloped with the French music master, and I have since heard that he had settled into this belief. Miss St. John, I must lift the shadow from both their lives, and thwart Sibyl Lee. Give me your sister's address, and I will go there."

"Mrs. Lennard has gone into the country; she has a cottage at Newton, but I can write out the directions, so that you cannot fail to find her. Meanwhile, stay with me till morning."

The day subsequent, Miss Harding was on her way to London. As she stood on the platform, on arriving at the terminus, she fancied she perceived a familiar face, and the next moment, a well-known voice said:

"Margaret Harding!"

The speaker was Edward Stanley; and the woman's heart beat fast at the memories his presence recalled.

"I am surprised to see you, Mr. Stanley," she observed; "but it appears you have been travelling as well as myself. You look charged. Perhaps you study too hard."

"My friends and physician think so; but the truth is, nobody knows what I have suffered since Alice's flight. Sometimes it seems the terrible certainty that she loved another, would not be more wearying than the suspense I have endured."

"Mr. Stanley, I have learned what will throw some light upon her fate."

"Speak—speak!" gasped the young man; and Margaret Harding proceeded to repeat the particulars of her visits to Mrs. Lee and Bertha St. John, with the disclosures the latter had made.

It would be impossible to describe Stanley's emotion as he listened. His face flushed and paled by turns; his lip quivered; his whole frame shook.

"Oh, Miss Harding," he cried, "I will join you in your search; and God grant that it may not be in vain!"

On the following morning, the two took a train for Newton; and the young man's pulse thrilled as Mrs. Lennard's cottage was pointed out to him, only a few rods distant.

They were, however, doomed to disappointment; the two servants, who had been left in charge of the premises and the children, informed them that Miss Hunt had not been there for two months, their mistress having discharged her soon after they came into the country.

"And what was the reason?" inquired Miss Harding.

"Ah, marm! she was a nice young lady, and had no fault; but being too pretty, Mrs. Lennard was jealous of her. Mr. Rivers, a gentleman she'd set her cap for, fell desperately in love with Miss Alice, and when she found out he'd proposed to her, she turned her off."

"And where is she now?" queried the young man, with breathless interest.

In reply, he simply gained the information that she was supposed to have gone to London to find employment. Thither Stanley and Margaret Harding followed her. Through the hot and crowded streets, and in stifling alleys, they prosecuted their search; to no purpose.

In a whirl of doubt and perplexity, Margaret Harding wrote to Bertha St. John, and in due time received the characteristic answer which we here transcribe:

"MY DEAR MISS HARDING,—I can never forgive my sister Bell for her unjust course toward Alice Hunt.

When I inquired how she liked her new governess, she told me she feared she was too pretty, as she did not wish to find a rival in her; but I did not believe she could be so ungenerous as to dismiss her to gratify a mere caprice. I shall immediately call her to account for her conduct, and try to ascertain from her, and in every other possible way, whether Alice is living or dead."

Very sincerely yours,

"BERTHA ST. JOHN."

With heavy hearts, Russell and Miss Harding read the above, for it showed that the suspicions of Mrs. Lennard's servants were not groundless.

CHAPTER XVIII

Soph.—Our first design, my friend, has proved abortive: Still there remains an after-game to play.

Semp.—Confusion! I have failed of half my purpose—Marcia, the charming Marcia's left behind.

Addison.

WHEN we had our last glimpse of Castinelli he was walled in by the towering rocks of the Castle Mountain Pass. The lapse of another day brought with it a fourth refugee. It was Gaston, from whom Castinelli had parted on the distant English shore; and at sight of him the Italian started to his feet and waved his hand in triumph.

"What! are you glad to find me driven like yourself into the sierras?" he demanded, fiercely.

"It is said misery likes company," rejoined Castinelli; "but that is not the sole reason of my sudden joy. You have come from England within a few weeks, and I am dying to know how it fares with my beautiful lady-love."

"To which do you refer?" asked the Spaniard, with a sneer.

"By my faith, I have but one there, though you would fain insinuate to the contrary."

"But," continued Gaston, "in your own land you had a dark-eyed Beatrice. She followed you to England, and is there playing a desperate game."

Castinelli growled an oath, adding:

"Explain, explain—I must know the truth of the matter."

"She and her sister, Aurora, are creating quite a sensation with their artificial flowers; and thrice Beatrice has ventured into Mrs. Lee's house, on the pretence of making sales, but in reality to watch her and see if she can learn anything with regard to you."

"Does the lady suspect her?"

"Not she, I assure you. She admires her flowers, and treats her with unusual condescension; but the day after you left, she found a ring of yours on the carpet, while she was waiting alone for her patroness, and fainted. Still, Mrs. Lee did not dream of the cause, and attributed it to hard work and a long walk."

"Per Baccio," muttered Castinelli, "I ought to be there to manage affairs; and as soon as our foes are put on the wrong trail, I will be off again."

"I have not told you all," responded the Spaniard.

"Your threats have lost their power over your fair Sibyl, and she plays the enchantress to a charm. Her parties are the wonder of every one, and the name of her admirers is legion."

"And does she receive homage, which I forbade?"

"Ay, ay; in spite of her half-mourning, she is a belle; and they say she is to marry a young man belonging to one of the first families."

"Who—who?"

"Edward Stanley. Your Bird of Paradise needs watching, Castinelli; and yet we must hide amid these far mountains nobody knows how long."

At this juncture, the Apache girl swung herself from a jutting rock, and stood before them.

"Pierre Raget, the unerring old hunter, is on your track," she exclaimed; "and his companions have sworn to seize you in the Castle Mountain Pass. Once more you must take to flight!"

"Ugh," cried the Indians; and with their usual adroitness they saddled their horses, tightened their belts, and declared they were ready to guide the refugees to some place where they could be more secure.

Filing through the pass, they picked their way with consummate skill through the wild intricacies of the mountains.

After incredible hardships and privations, Bernard Castinelli gained a Texan seaport, and, assuming a new costume and character, took passage for England.

With his wonted shrewdness, he laid his plans, and brought all his energies into requisition to carry them out.

It was on a summer night that Mrs. Lee sat in her opera-box, radiant and beautiful.

The stately poise of her head, the dark splendour of her eyes; the profusion of jetty braids; the *coiffure* of velvet, à la Marie Stuart, and fastened above her white brow by a single diamond; the purple robe; the fur cloak, falling back from her graceful shoulders, formed a picture at which many a glass was levelled.



[RAYMOND OLIVER INTRODUCES KATY TO HIS HOUSEKEEPER.]

The charm of her bearing, however, was, that she did not seem to heed the homage paid her, but conversed quietly with the gentleman at her side.

The orchestra played the overture, and the curtain rose.

The clear, sweet voice of Castinelli, the great baritone, swelled through the building, and then died away like a soft flute note.

Sibyl Lee was not prepared for this. His name had not been announced among the attractions of the company; and now she felt confident it had been withheld by his request, that his sudden appearance might surprise and shock her.

Her heart beat fast, her brain whirled, and it required one of the strongest efforts of her life to preserve any degree of composure.

The gay throng around did not notice her confusion; but Castinelli marked, with a thrill of triumph, the flush which shot into her cheek, and the restless fingers trifling with her lorgnette.

The three hours during which Mrs. Lee remained at the opera seemed an age to her, her anxiety was so intense; and it was with extreme difficulty that she could sustain her part in the conversation when, between the scenes, gentlemen entered her box to have a bit of a chit-chat with the charming widow.

At length the curtain fell, and one of her numerous admirers offered to hand her to her carriage. When the door had closed upon her, she sank back, muttering:

"Oh! Bernard, Bernard, what torture you inflict! Shall I never, never be free from your persecution?"

It did not require long to reach the splendid home bequeathed to her by Goldsworth Lee—the home which she had thought she might find a Paradise, but which the warnings and threats of Margaret Harding and the visits of Castinelli had surrounded with the most dismal associations.

She had scarcely had time to throw off her cloak by the glowing hearthstone, when Castinelli appeared, bowing with as courtly a grace as if he were acknowledging the homage of the multitude from which he had just retired.

"I hope," he began, with an exulting smile, "that our meeting is as pleasant to you as it is delightful to me."

"Bernard, you shall not mock me thus. There was triumph in your eyes to-night when you watched me in the theatre; and you are pleased to meet me, only because you wish to regain your power."

"Ay, ay. I hear you have led a gay life in my absence, and are fast becoming a belle. Nay, more:

amid the mountains of Texas I learned you were to marry Signor Stanley."

"These stories are false, Bernard—mere gossip; he does not care for me, and is betrothed to another."

"It is well," rejoined the Italian. "As I said before, no man shall stand beside you at the altar; and you know by past experience mine are no idle threats."

"Yes, yes; you are my evil genius!" gasped the lady, clenching her white hands across her brow.

"Sibyl," resumed Castinelli, "I am now situated where I can be vigilant; and I shall keep you under my eye. All will go well if you do not drive me to desperation, and then I would not answer for the consequences. Good-night; it is late, and I must play Ernani to-morrow."

As he emerged from the mansion, humming a fragment of the part he had sung in Mrs. Lee's hearing, a slight figure rose and confronted him.

"Beatrice!" exclaimed Castinelli, involuntarily; and the girl staggered towards him, murmuring:

"Oh, Bernard—at last—at last you have come."

"Yes, yes; but why are you shivering in this cold climate? It is no place for you, daughter of the sun."

"But I could not live without you, Bernard; and I begged Aurora to take me to the land whither you had gone. How old I have grown since I trod the soil of England! It seems as if fifty years had dragged by since you walked with me along the Campagna."

"How so? What mean you, Beatrice?"

"The poison of distrust has crept into my soul, and 'tis wasting my life, Bernard."

"Beatrice, do you doubt me? There is no cause." And he laid his hand upon her head for an instant, after the old, caressing custom of by-gone days.

"Do not try to deceive me," replied the girl—"what brings you to the home of the enchantress, whose name is on every tongue? What has kept you here thus long, if you are not in love with the beautiful Sibyl?"

Castinelli hesitated for a time, and then drew her arm within his own, murmuring:

"Come with me, Beatrice, and let me guide you to your lodgings; on the way I will endeavour to restore light and bloom to your young face."

With these words, he led her from the aristocratic vicinage where Mrs. Lee resided.

Before they had proceeded far, Beatrice had told, with simple eloquence, how a former friend, whom Aurora chanced to meet lately, had alluded to Castinelli's love for the fair Englishwoman; how she had gone to Mrs. Lee, with a wild desire to see the woman who stood between her and happiness; and how she had suffered when she found his ring on the carpet.

"Hark ye, carissima," observed Castinelli; "Mrs. Lee is only a friend, whose acquaintance I made when I first came to England; she does not love me, nor care whom I marry. Nobody in the wide world holds me so dear as you, Beatrice." And, to say the least, the concluding sentence had the merit of being truthful.

"Has the cloud vanished?" he continued, gazing into the dark eyes, uplifted to him.

"Yes, Bernard, I trust you once more, and I am happy! What a change has come over me since I saw you in the street, and spoke such bitter reproaches! Forgive me, Bernard!"

Castinelli's reply was a kiss; and talking cheerily, they walked on; and in a few moments they were in a little room where the girls had toiled and suffered. Aurora had been busy at work till she perceived them enter; and then the delicate wax flower dropped from her grasp, shivering to atoms, and she sank exhausted on a lounge near.

"Look up—look up, Aurora!" cried Beatrice; "Bernard is here!"

Aurora lifted her dark eyes, and extending her thin hand, said:

"Welcome, Castinelli, welcome—my poor sister has pined for you sadly."

"And doubted me, too, Aurora; but we are reconciled, and you can see that she is content and happy."

"Yes—yes; I can leave her in your care, and she will soon need your protection. As for me, my strength has long been wasting—I shall not live long."

Beatrice knelt by her sister, and weaving her slender fingers amid her own, bathed that fair face with her tears.

"You are weary and nervous," she murmured; "it cannot be you are dying, Aurora."

The girl did not speak; but a solemn beauty stole over her features, and her eyes kindled with a rapt and far-off gaze. Her dreams had faded, the hopes of her youth were crushed, and death seemed a blessed repose. She never spoke again; but when the morning broke, the rosy dawnlight fell on the marble face of the dead Aurora! She had died with the secret of her love for Bernard Castinelli hoarded in the depths of her tried heart, and not even the subtle Italian suspected the grief which had rendered her life a burden. They buried her in a neighbouring cemetery, and above her grave they raised a cross—a fitting symbol of the cross which had rested so heavily upon her soul!

(To be continued.)



[GIRLING AGAIN!]

THE BONDAGE OF BRANDON.

CHAPTER LXXV.

Could you feel but half the anguish,
Half the tortures that I bear,
Now for you I daily languish,
You'd be kind as you are fair. *Dorset.*

The night succeeding the day upon which she was arrested and lodged in durance by the indefatigable lawyer's clerk was passed by Mimi in great misery.

Sleep was wooed in vain by her. How was it possible that she could sleep upon the hard boards of the cell in which she was confined.

She had always been accustomed to a luxurious couch, the bed and pillows of which, if not exactly stuffed with eider down, were filled with the finest feathers.

She leant against the wall, and then tried to recline at full length, but without being able to close her eyes.

How profoundly she execrated George Littleboy in her heart!

If that enterprising and revengeful young gentleman could have seen her as she sat in the dismal hole in which she was confined, restlessly moving from one side to the other in search of repose, which she could not obtain, he would have pitied her.

She could not tell how the time went, because the cell was too dark to allow her to look at the hands of her watch.

She amused herself for some minutes by counting the ticks, and adding them together; but she wearied of that, and her misery, exorcised by the irksomeness of her confinement, gave way to rage.

Rising to her feet, she impatiently paced the stone-paved floor, and gave way to the most angry exclamations.

She hoped fervently that Mr. Welby would be able to procure her liberation on bail the next morning. She felt sanguine as to the success of a renewed application.

The burst of passion into which she indulged had a beneficial effect upon her, for it brought about exhaustion; and sitting down upon the hard seat, which, as a bed, was an abomination to all but drunken men, whose senses were steeped in the waters of oblivion, her tired lids fell over her weary eyes, and she sank into an uneasy slumber.

She was not destined to enjoy it long, however; for, as it happened, a concert was held that evening at the

Cow and Thistle, a public-house a few doors from the police-station.

Some working men, either excited by the music or the beer they imbibed, or the two combined, created a disturbance, assaulted one another, broke the windows, and finished up the night's amusement by getting up in the street what the Yankee's call a "free fight."

When the disturbance was assuming the dimensions of a riot, the police roused themselves, and, drawing their staves, rushed out in a body to disperse the combatants; who, full of vinous courage, obstinately refused to be dispersed.

The "free fight" now became interesting, and many a night-capped head was thrust out of a hastily opened window, so that the performance might be witnessed gratuitously.

The gaslamps did not emit a very brilliant light, owing to the pressure on the main not being excessive, which made the affair look like a spectacular drama at a minor theatre, with the lights half-down, as they always are in thrilling scenes, like those in the *Corsican Brothers*.

When a few more heads had been broken, and one policeman seriously injured by a brickbat, which struck him on the bridge of the nose, the labourers retreated, leaving four of their number in the hands of the authorities, to be dealt with according to law, which, in English rural districts, means forty shillings or a month.

Three women were also captured, and dragged into the police-station in an hysterical condition. The noise they made was not at all conducive to sound sleep; and Mimi woke up with a start and shudder, having dreamt that she was paying a flying visit to Pandemonium, and had not been well received by the vivacious inhabitants of that delectable region.

Her surprise at the horrible *mélange*, made up of the screams of women, the oaths of men, and the hoarse voices of the police, gave way to dismay when the door of her cell was rudely opened, and the concentrated light of two lanterns flashed across her face, and dazzled her eyes.

This unpleasant illumination was the prelude to something worse, for a couple of drunken women were pushed into the cell. One fell upon the floor, the other staggered to a seat, and sat down with a thump that must have jarred every nerve in her body.

Enraged beyond measure at what she considered a studied insult, Mimi rushed forward with the intention of remonstrating with the bleary-eyed gaoles, whose stock of civility was remarkably small, for he shut the door with a slam in her face, and turned the key on

the outside with a vicious violence, which was part and parcel of the man's nature. In a loud voice Mimi called to him to return; but her appeal was unheeded, and she stood against the closed door in the darkness, mute with passion, and trembling, as every drop of blood in her body was boiling at fever heat.

A woman of the world would have made the best of the matter, and have waited for the dawn of the day with philosophic calmness. Her wisest course would have been to retreat as far as the narrow dimensions of the cell would allow her, and give the female bacchant a wide berth.

One of them was helplessly intoxicated, and had already commenced that nocturnal pastime known as snoring, which, as she was lying on her back, was not of the softest description. Perhaps she wished to supplement the concert she had listened to at the Cow and Thistle, with a little music of her own, which she gave her auditors with a zest and vehemence beyond all praise.

The other woman was talkative; and when she heard Mimi call upon the gaoles to remove her to another place, she felt annoyed, and began a tirade which was chiefly remarkable for its want of elegance and the redundancy of its invective. She had remarked as she entered the cell, that Mimi was neatly and expensively dressed; that, in short, she was a lady. She had remarked all this just as Mimi had remarked that the companions of her captivity, who were so inexcusably thrust upon her privacy, were coarse and vulgar, who had lost the slightest claim upon the consideration of other members of their sex, and had forfeited every title to respect.

What a punishment it was to Mimi, who, whatever her faults were, certainly rejoiced in a refined taste and a cultivated mind, to hear the slang of the *eul de sac* and the almost execrable *petois* of the back allies and glums of a country town. How horribly the echo of the drunken woman's shrewish tongue must have rang in her ears. Fortunately, to the pure all things are pure; and many of the woman's detestable exclamations and disgusting phrases were utterly lost upon her whom they were intended to shock and annihilate.

Manual violence was what Mimi deprecated and dreaded most of all. She feared to answer her antagonist, lest she should fly upon her and vent her fury in a savage manner.

At length the termagant gave way to the quantity of liquor she had imbibed; and after a few inarticulate attempts at renewed abuse, she fell asleep, and snored as soundly as her associate in disgrace.

There was no more sleep, no more rest for Mimi

that night. She felt like a person confined against her will in a snake-frequented cave in the tropics. The drunken women were to her mind so many venomous serpents, and it leaved her to keep her eyes open, in case they roused themselves from their sluggish torpor and did her some grievous bodily harm.

When that awfully wretched night had given place to morning, Mimi looked haggard and careworn. What wonder that she should do so? At nine o'clock Alice Welby arrived, and requested permission to see her friend. It was granted her; and the proud Mimi, now rather subdued, was led out like a criminal by the gaoler, and marched into the outer office. For this slight indulgence she was thankful.

Alice was inexpressibly shocked to see the condition to which one night had reduced her preceptress. "How very ill you look!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I can believe I look ill, for I have passed a disagreeable night," replied Mimi.

"Was the bed hard?" asked Alice, innocently.

"Hard? There was none at all."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Certainly I am. If you call a deal board a bed, why, there was one, and I am wrong."

"How shocking!"

"That is not the worst."

"Whatever did they make you suffer?"

"I was not allowed to be alone in my misery."

"Indeed!" Alice exclaimed, in surprise.

"The police thrust two drunken women into the prison."

"Impossible!"

"I assure you I do not exaggerate in the least, my dear Alice; and one of the monsters abused me in the vilest language, because I expressed a wish to be removed."

"If papa knew this, the inspector would be dismissed."

"I am afraid not; he only did what the law gave him power to do," Mimi replied, with a sorrowful shake of the head.

"Of course you have had your breakfast," Alice said.

"My dear child, how simple you are!" Mimi answered; "they do not feed people at these places."

"Really!"

"Never."

"But you will faint if you have nothing."

"Oh, no; I am stronger than you think."

The two young ladies remained in earnest conversation until the time for the court to assemble arrived, when Mr. Welby made his appearance, and spoke kindly and hopefully to Mimi, who was interesting, though pale.

As there was not a full bench, it was determined by the justices present to postpone Mimi's examination till that day week; and, in spite of the strenuous opposition of Squire Jackson and George Littleboy, bail was admitted, and Mr. Welby became security for Mimi's reappearance in a heavy sum.

Mimi left the court triumphantly with her friends; as she passed out of the police court George Littleboy pressed up to her side, and said, "One word, Miss Zedfern?"

She looked down disdainfully upon him.

"I will not detain you a minute."

"I can readily believe that, as I will not give you the chance," she replied loftily.

"For the present you are free."

"And I intend to remain so."

"I warn you that I shall watch you carefully."

"You may do your worst."

"If you escape from this country it will be by a miracle."

"Nothing you can do will prevent me from acting as I see fit," she replied.

When the carriage was reached, Mr. Welby handed Mimi in, and Alice followed. As the vehicle drove off, George Littleboy was to be seen in earnest conversation with the gaoler and inspector, his intimacy with whom seemed to bode no particular good to Mimi.

During the journey home, Mr. Welby said to Mimi, while a smile of pleasure irradiated his face, "Jackson did his worst, but he found my influence stronger than his. My brother magistrates know and respect me, while they detest him as a early curmudgeon."

"Poor Mimi has suffered so, papa," Alice observed; "I wonder she is alive after enduring all she has had to go through."

"Well, well! it is all over now, and we must be more merry than usual, to make up for it."

Alice seized her friend's hand, and held it in an amiable grasp all the way home.

Putting on a serious air, Mr. Welby said to Mimi: "You will, I know, excuse my putting a few questions to you."

"Do you wish to satisfy yourself on any point?"

"I do."

"Speak, by all means, then; and say what you like," replied Mimi.

"Who is the Count de Cannes, whose name was mentioned in the course of to-day's inquiry?"

"I really know no more than yourself."

"I presume you were acquainted with him through visiting at the Priory with Alice?"

"Exactly."

"He is accused by Mr. Littleboy of having committed a robbery."

"I should have thought, Mr. Welby, that you had already seen sufficient of Mr. Littleboy to discover that he is a man altogether unworthy of credence. He saw me one day accidentally, and fell in love with me. He asked me to marry him, and I refused. All his subsequent persecution arises from my hatred for him, which I take no pains to conceal, but openly express."

"The charge, then, is trumped up."

"I cannot say that. The Count de Cannes may have robbed the Earl of Brandon; but how I could have participated in the proceeds of the robbery, or why the count should have made me his partner, is more than I can tell," replied Mimi.

"I firmly believe that there is not the slightest ground for the charge against you," Mr. Welby exclaimed, emphatically; "and if five thousands pounds had been demanded as bail for you, I would not have hesitated to give it."

Miss Zedfern thanked Mr. Welby for his kindness and good opinion of her, and the small party returned home in comparative silence. During the best part of the day Mimi closeted herself in her bedroom, and at five o'clock in the afternoon she went out for a walk, saying she should return in time for dinner. Alice offered to accompany her, but she declined her proffered companionship, on the ground of feeling unhappy and wishing to be alone to collect her thoughts. Alice did not press her, and Mimi left Mr. Welby's house without bag or baggage. As she walked down the avenue leading up through the park from the lodge gates, she turned round at a break in the trees and took a last fond look at the noble mansion in which she had passed some years of her life. In that vivid glance, she bade the Welbys and their dwelling a final adieu.

A tear trembled on her eyelid; but, hastily recovering from her momentary weakness, she walked on at an increased pace in the direction of the railway station. As she entered it, which she did after a brisk walk, she found she had ten minutes to wait before the London express was due. She was thickly veiled; and after taking her ticket, sat down in the ladies' waiting-room. When the train was fairly in the station, she left her hiding place, and sought the seclusion of a first-class carriage, which she reached in safety.

With a sigh of relief, she leant back against the easy, if not luxurious cushions, and as the train rolled out of the station, finding herself alone, she burst into tears. She had with unusual fortitude supported herself up to the present time, but at length she gave way. She was neither an amazon nor a stoic, and there was a limit to her endurance.

Soon she fell asleep, and made up for the dreadful night she had passed in the police-station.

On her arrival in London, she woke up rather bewildered; but quickly remembering where she was and what had happened to her, she sprang from the carriage and hailed a cab; but as she was about to jump in, she fell back once more amidst the throng of passengers, as George Littleboy's well-known figure encountered her gaze. He was, however, too quick for her; and before she could disappear in the crowd, he was standing by her side and saying, in a self-satisfied tone:

"Capital travelling, Miss Zedfern. Capital, upon my word."

Mimi looked astounded, and he continued: "Beats the stage-coaches out of the field, eh? They've no chance with the iron horse."

CHAPTER LXXVI

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.

Cowper.

DURING his wife's illness no one could have been more devoted to her than Reginald Welby. He was constant in his attendance upon her, and every wish of hers was anticipated and gratified before it was openly expressed.

When she grew well and strong again, she thanked him for his assiduity, and assured him that she loved him more than ever.

Reginald forgot all that had happened in Spain, and fancied the death of Sir Lawrence Allingford was nothing but a hideous dream. If the mnemonic voice whispered, with jarring iteration, in his ear, the charges brought by the deceased baronet against his wife, he refused to listen to it. Lady Brandon was the mother of his child; and if he believed her to be one iota less

than an angel of light, he felt that he should take leave of his senses. So the weak-minded man fell a victim to the snares of the strong-minded woman, and bowed her head when he ought to have been haughty and stiff-necked.

Her ladyship took great delight in carriage exercise. The charming green lanes of Willesden and its neighbourhood, together with the beautiful view from Harrow-on-the-Hill, were favourite resorts of hers, and her fleet horses bore her from the smoky metropolis to the country with incredible swiftness.

The Earl of Brandon had been buried, and Reginald Welby was chief mourner on the occasion. Blanche was too ill to attend, for which she was not at all sorry, as she had little real affection for her brother, and was secretly rejoiced that he was dead, because his decease made way for her child, and gave it a title, together with vast accompanying estates.

Shopping was also a favourite pastime with her, and she spent vast sums in buying things for which she had no earthly use.

A fresher bloom than her husband had ever remarked before illuminated her cheeks, and she wore altogether a happier expression than formerly.

The fact was, she congratulated herself upon having succeeded in all her schemes, and upon having triumphed over her enemies. Where was Sir Lawrence Allingford? Dead. Of what avail now were his threats and his thinly disguised hatred? Where was Girling? That question was not so easily answered. Girling—during Lady Brandon's acquaintance with him—had been something like Anteus. You might knock him down and trample upon him afterwards, if you like; but he had a singular way of springing up again, and confronting you when you least expected him. And yet Lady Brandon did not fear Girling as she used to.

He had no reason to hate her as Sir Lawrence had. He was a man who could at any time be bought with money. He might, some time ago, have made a market of his secret with the Earl of Brandon, but that nobleman was now dead, and therefore Girling was harmless. If he denounced her misdeeds to the police, he would not get a penny piece for his vindictive trouble, and she considered herself justified in supposing that, by small gifts of money, she could do as she liked with him, and render him harmless.

Occasionally the fate of the child was uppermost in her thoughts; but she brought herself to believe that the real heir to the title and estates accompanying the earldom of Brandon was dead. She had yet to be certified upon this important point, and the certification happened curiously enough during one of her shopping excursions in a fashionable thoroughfare. She had just quitted a shop, where laces and silks of the costliest description were retailed at an extravagant price, as Reginald had found to his cost. The carriage was drawn up by the road side, and the footman in the chocolate-coloured livery of the Brandon family, was obsequiously holding the door open; the coachman sat on the box in a drowsy condition, while his curiously shaped wig made him look like a bad cross between a Lord Chancellor and a barber's block.

Just as Reginald was about to hand his wife into the carriage, a man, decently but not fashionably dressed, stepped up to her ladyship, and, with a polite bow, exclaimed:

"I hope your ladyship is well."

Lady Brandon stared blankly at the man who so unceremoniously accosted her.

Not at all abashed, he continued:

"This is what I call an unexpected pleasure."

The man held a small bundle of printed papers in his hand; and when Reginald caught sight of them, he concluded that the fellow was a mountebank of some sort, and was employing an impudent device to obtain money from a perfect stranger, whose rank he had merely guessed at. So he said to Lady Brandon:

"Do you know this man?"

"Allow me to answer that very pertinent question, sir," replied the man, who was no other than Girling.

"I did not address myself to you."

"I am perfectly aware of the fact, sir."

"Then mind your own business."

"That is exactly what I am doing."

"I don't wish to hold any conversation with a vagabond like yourself, sir," cried Welby, angrily.

"The insult is pardonable, when I consider the source from whence it comes," replied Girling, with forced calmness and mock composure.

"Come into the carriage, Reginald!" exclaimed Blanche. "I cannot allow myself to be worried in the street by such fellows. Their audacity really passes every limit of endurance."

She had recognized Girling; but she hoped, by feigning ignorance of his identity, to get away from him, and throw him off the scent.

If she imagined she had the least chance of eluding him in the manner she proposed, she was sadly ignorant of the resources of his fertile brain.

Lady Brandon was already in the carriage; but Welby was unable to follow, owing to the interposition of Girling's body between the door and himself.

"Move on one side," he said, imperiously.

"Not just yet. I have something to say before I go or allow you to go."

"What are you?"

"A talented individual in the employ of the famous Wizard of the South, with one of whose cards I shall be happy to make you a present, without charging anything for the valuable and highly instructive document," answered Girling.

Reginald pushed away the proffered card, and said:

"Who are you? What is your name?"

"William Girling."

"Ah!" cried Reginald; "I have heard that name before. Let me see."

He tapped his forehead with his finger.

Lady Brandon began to think it would be prudent to get her husband away from the dangerous proximity of a man who knew a great deal about her, and might awaken those buried memories and suspicions which had their origin abroad, but which had been put to rest since the birth of their child.

"How much longer are you going to talk to that man?" she said, petulantly.

He did not hear her, but muttered to himself:

"Spain—Madre de Dios—Sir Lawrence Allingford!"

Girling had listened eagerly to every word which fell from his lips, and exclaimed:

"That's it! You've struck the very note at last! That's it! Sir Lawrence Allingford! Stick to that! He knew me, and I knew him!"

"I shall drive on without you, Reginald!" Blanche cried, warningly.

Without the least hesitation, Girling said:

"By all means, drive on. I can stand behind with the footman. It will be as comfortable at your house, if not more so, for conversation, than the street. I dare say my master, the Wizard of the South, will excuse my taking French leave for an hour or so. If not, I shouldn't break my heart over it."

Not caring to wait for an answer, Girling jumped up behind the carriage, and took up his position by the footman, who stood on the footboard and eyed him askance, as if not being able to interpret him with his accustomed cleverness.

The carriage drove off, and for some distance Girling and the footman were able to converse freely.

"How do, Johnny?" exclaimed Girling.

"Who are you calling Johnny?" replied the footman, who was indignant at being so familiarly accosted.

"One no better than myself."

"And no worse, I should think."

"That's a matter of opinion. I should think more of you if you were inclined to be civil."

The footman said something about huckstering fellows, and smooth-tongued pedlars.

"Come Johnny," replied Girling, "you'd better keep a civil tongue in your head or else you'll have to walk."

"Walk! what do you mean?"

"You'll see presently, if you don't take a hint."

"It's a pity you didn't go inside. I dare say they'd have pulled the blinds down for you."

"Got a nice missis?"

"None so bad," replied the footman; "flies out sometimes, and then I gives warning."

"Don't do it again," cried Girling, earnestly.

"Why not?"

"Because you'd be so great a loss to the family. Couldn't move without you, Johnny."

"I say," exclaimed the footman, indignantly.

"What. Let's chalk it up."

"I won't have it."

"Sorry for that."

"Why?"

"I don't see how you can help it."

"You'll make me begin directly."

"Now mind your a, b, c, Johnny, or—"

"Or what?"

"You'll have to walk, as I had the honour of telling you a minute or so ago."

The footman began to get very irate, and glared at Girling with the ferocity of a wild beast.

"You can't make me," he said.

"I'll try."

Suiting the action to the word, Girling administered a vigorous kick to the footman, which had the effect of knocking his legs off the footboard. The shock was so great, and the attack so unexpected, that the man slipped from his hold of the strap which had hitherto kept him in a perpendicular position, and fell on his face in the road. By accommodating himself to the motion of the carriage, he avoided falling on his face, or stumbling; and by dint of hard running, kept up with the vehicle.

Girling turned round and looked pityingly at him, saying:

"I told you how it would be, Johnny; only instead of walking, you've got to run."

"Wait till I get up again," gasped the footman, who was red with rage and unwonted exertion.

"You're not up yet."

"I shan't be long first."

"Don't it pump the wind up? Ah, I thought so. It's good for the lungs. It'll do you a world of good, Johnny. You'll thank me for it to-morrow. There's nothing like stretching your legs. This little pipe-opener's worth a five pound note or a Jew's eye to you. It'll make a man of you, Johnny."

The footman shook his fist at his tormentor, and then assayed to mount to his old place; but he had no sooner placed his hand upon the board, than Girling put his foot on it and gave it a very respectable squeeze, exclaiming as he did so, and as the poor fellow's howl of pain saluted his ears:

"There's nothing so good as being woke up now and then."

While this pantomime *al fresco* was taking place, an altercation of a stormy nature was going on in the interior of the carriage.

"Why did you let that odious wretch get up behind our carriage?" Lady Blanche exclaimed.

"I really don't see how I could help it. The fellow was so determined," replied Reginald.

"I suppose you wish to see him and question him, because he mentioned the name of my inveterate enemy, Sir Lawrence Allingford."

"When he mentioned Sir Lawrence Allingford's name, and said his own was Girling, I am free to confess I did wish to put a few questions to him."

"You can do so if you like," his wife said, with an affectation of indifference.

"No, no! it was only a passing wish."

"You suspect me, Reginald," she cried.

He made no answer.

"Speak to me. I will not be treated with contempt. The accidental meeting with that man has once more made you suspicious. If so, let me know the worst at once."

As usual, Reginald Welby was irresolute and vacillating. He had once suspected his wife of being a murderess, and a fortuitous event brought back those suspicions, which he had, beneath the force of her blandishments, abandoned. If Sir Lawrence Allingford had, with the purple hue of death upon his fevered lips, told the truth in one respect, why should he not have done so in another? He had mentioned the name of a man called Girling, and referred him to this individual for information respecting the crime of his wife.

At first he had been disposed to think that Girling was the fictitious and visionary creation of a diseased mind and a heated brain; but here he was in the flesh, riding at that very moment behind his carriage. Lady Brandon denied all knowledge of him; but Girling was evidently acquainted with her, if she was not with him.

"Reginald, I insist upon having an answer," said Lady Brandon, in a more authoritative tone than she had yet employed.

"What do you wish me to say?" he replied in a feeble voice.

"Do you love me as well as ever?"

"You cannot doubt that."

"If you suspect me of being an assassin, and I don't know what besides, how can you love me?"

"I do love you," he said, simply.

"Will you tell me honestly that there is not a tittle of suspicion lurking in your mind?"

"I cannot say that."

Lady Brandon's eyes lighted up with a fierce fire.

"By those words," she exclaimed, you have pronounced the doom of our wedded life."

"The doom," he repeated, dismally.

"Yes, Reginald; the doom."

"I—I am at a loss—I cannot understand."

"You shall not be kept long in ignorance of my meaning. I will not live with you to be insulted. I am innocent, and your suspicion hurt my feelings so cruelly that I must leave you. I have had very little peace since I married you. Let us separate. I will take our child, the young Earl of Brandon and live at Kirkdale Priory. You can go home to your relations or live *en garçon* in London. I will not trouble you, I promise you."

"How absurdly you talk, Blanche!"

"Wait a bit, and you will see whether I am absurd or not. You shall not come into the same house with me any more. It is a divorce between us. I am the judge, and the doom is pronounced. It is useless for you to appeal against it. If you pursue and persecute me, I will go abroad, and where you cannot find me."

"Avoid Madre de Dios, at all events," he said savagely.

"Oh! you can taunt me at last, can you? That shows how you hate me in your heart!"

"I hate you? Well, if I did, it would be your own fault."

"Let everything end here," cried Lady Brandon, "I am determined that it shall. You are neither one thing nor the other. It is impossible that any woman can respect you; a profession of religion is what you are eternally making, but you are never up to your principles, and you have not the courage to be bad. If your character was in any way decided, I could tolerate you. I have tried to assimilate my tastes to yours, and failed most signally. As I said before, let everything end here. If you attempt to follow me into the house, rest assured that I shall lose no time in walking out of it, with the baby in my arms. I have my own private fortune, and I am not dependent upon you; therefore you cannot coerce me about money matters."

This bold speech, which, for its decision and audacity, was unequalled in his experience, astounded Welby, who was at a loss to know what to do. After a few minutes' deliberation, he replied:

"It shall be as you wish for a short time, Blanche—my own dear Blanche—still dear, still loved, still fondly adored, if every word your enemies say against you is true. I will see this man and question him. If there is any truth in his allegations, it will be best for both of us that we part. If not, I will come to you and throw myself at your feet, and beg your forgiveness on my knees. I hope and trust with all my heart I may be mistaken; but I will see him and set this vexed question at rest, one way or the other, for ever."

Lady Brandon turned pale. She had overreached herself. It had never entered her calculations that her weak-minded husband could ever act decidedly; but she was mistaken. He felt it to be the crisis of his life; and summoning up all his resolution, he determined to vindicate his character for religious observance of divine laws, and act independently for once in his life. Her taunts had a great deal to do with this resolve. She had harped so incessantly upon a tender string that she had broken it at last.

It was not by any means part of her plan to allow him to leave her, as he proposed, and she worried herself to devise some means of recalling him to her side.

Her little *bien carti* hand sought his palm, which was, like her own, slightly effeminate, and not nearly so manly as it should have been. She pressed it affectionately; and making her eyes soft and dewlike, looked up at him with a glance of concentrated love.

"Reginald!" she exclaimed, in a thrilling tone.

At any other time he would have replied, "My own!" but now he simply said, "Well!"

"I think I spoke hastily just now."

"You spoke wisely."

"I do not consider that I did."

"I had some difficulty to think so just at first, but I do now. If you are innocent, as you say, no harm will result from the investigation I am about to make. You have at last roused me to a sense of my duty. I have for a long, long time been under a spell. I was weak and silly enough to believe that you could do nothing wrong. Now I see my error, and it is through your instrumentality that the awakening has been brought about. The scales have fallen from my eyes. I will henceforward act like a man, and not like a schoolboy."

A terrible dread took possession of Lady Brandon's breast. Suppose he were in earnest. What should she do? Without him, all her happiness would be wrecked; for if she did not love him with that ardent affection he felt, or had felt for her, she liked him, and had a feeling of friendship for him. He was useful to her, and she had grown accustomed to his society. He was so good and amiable. She had her own way in everything; and he rarely, if ever, grumbled at her most extravagant desires.

"Come, Reginald," she said, with a merry laugh, "forgive me for being wayward."

"This is not a case for forgiveness, Blanche," he replied.

"How harsh and stern you look!"

"I cannot help it."

"Give me a kiss, and make it up."

"I do not wish to kiss you," he said, turning away with all the determination of an anchorite tempted of the devil.

"Oh! but you must," she cried, peremptorily.

"Once, Blanche, I should have obeyed you."

"Why not now?"

"I can scarcely tell you; but all seems altered within the last half hour. I feel as if I had been turned out of Paradise; and when I wish to re-enter, an angel stands at the gate with a flaming sword."

"Oh, what nonsense! Give me a kiss, and let us be friends."

"No," he answered.

"You will not?"

He shook his head.

"Oh, Reginald!" cried Blanche, covering her face with her gloved hands, and bursting into tears, "why do you treat me like this?"

"You have provoked the treatment of which you complain."

"I have done nothing of the sort. It is barbarous and inhuman."

"I merely took you at your word."

"Women will be naughty sometimes. I cannot help my temper. If you object to my disagreeable way of speaking when I am put out, you should not have married me. I have been naughty, and I am sorry for it. There, I cannot say anything more," she exclaimed, removing her hands, and gazing anxiously at him through her tears.

"The die is cast, Blanche."

"Oh, no!—no! A thousand times—no!" she cried.

"Yes!" he said, inexorably.

"Remember our child, Reginald."

"I do. I wish I could forget it. If—if all I suspect to be true turns out to be false—if that man can do you no harm—if he can say nothing to your prejudice, why fear him?"

For a few seconds, Lady Brandon was silent. She could hardly bring herself to believe, even now, that her husband was really in earnest.

She had under-estimated the force of his character when fully aroused; and the consequence was, she was confounded when she least expected the confusion.

The carriage pulled up; and the panting footman, wholly inarticulate with rage and exertion, let down the steps with a languid air.

Lady Brandon alighted, and saying, in a low tone: "At all events, you are my husband. I shall not permit you to forget that," entered her house, leaving Reginald on the pavement with Girling.

"My man," exclaimed Reginald, who was as solemn as a judge passing sentence of death on his own son.

"Sir?" replied Girling, who up to the present time had been grinning at the discomfited footman.

"I want a word with you. Step into the carriage," Girling did as he was directed.

It was yet early in the afternoon, and a drive in the park was at that hour a fashionable necessity; so that Girling hoped he was going to be paraded amongst the rich and great. Reginald also entered the carriage, and said to Girling:

"Tell the man to drive along the Uxbridge Road."

Girling leant out of the window, and exclaimed:

"Johnny, Uxbridge Road. You may rest a bit now."

The footman looked unutterable things at him, and disappeared.

A long conversation took place between Reginald and Girling, and the countenance of the former in a brief space wore an expression of blank despair; for Girling had corroborated all that Sir Lawrence Allingford had said, and Reginald felt that his child was a usurper, and had no more claim to the Earldom of Brandon than he had himself. Girling thought that by espousing the cause of the child, of whose identity he had irresistible proofs, he should be better able to make money than by adhering to Lady Brandon, who was so unprincipled as to be dangerous.

"Where is this child you speak of?" demanded Reginald.

"Not far from here, sir," replied Girling.

"Direct the coachman where to go—I wish to see it."

Girling did so; and during the journey to the farm-house where the child was at nurse, Reginald Welby was as silent as a corpse.

He hardly evinced the common signs of animation; and Girling looked at him terror-stricken more than once, for he thought the man's heart was breaking.

And so it was.

Duty and inclination had long been struggling together. At last, duty had conquered; but in subduing its enemy, it had brought about its own death-blow.

That is to say, duty was for the time incarnate in Reginald Welby; and when it died, there was a strong chance of his dying also.

"Here we are," suddenly cried Girling; "the farm is in sight; and, if I am not mistaken, I can see the boy at the gate."

Reginald roused himself, and looked listlessly out of the window.

Yes. Straight before him, playing in the gutter, making a mud pie, or committing some other extravagance of infancy, was the Theophilus of the farm, soon to astonish the world as the Earl of Brandon.

(To be continued.)

CURIOSITIES OF THE EARTH.—In digging at the city of Modena, in Italy, and about four miles around it, when the workmen arrive at the depth of sixty-three feet, they come to a bed of chalk, which they bore with an auger five feet deep. They then withdraw from the pit before the auger is removed, and upon its extraction the water bursts up through the

aperture with great violence, and quickly fills the new-made well, which continues full, and is affected neither by rains nor droughts. But that which is most remarkable is that, at the depth of fourteen feet are found the remains of an ancient city—paved streets, houses, floors, and different pieces of mosaic. Underneath is a soft earth, made up chiefly of vegetable matters; and at twenty-six feet deep large trees entire, such as walnut trees, with the walnuts still on the stem, and the leaves and branches in a perfect state of preservation. At twenty-eight feet deep a soft chalk is found, mixed with a vast quantity of shells; and this bed is eleven feet thick. Under it vegetables are found again, with leaves and branches of trees, as before."

THE BALL AND THE BRIDAL.

CHAPTER I.

I would, Lucas, I could devise a plan as quickly as you can; but if I could, I should need your coolness and courage to carry it out—*Old Play.*

"So this is the house, and there is to be a grand fête to-night," he said.

Lieutenant Montgomery stood for a moment glancing keenly around. He was dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant—a man of splendid appearance, with an eye like that of an eagle, a long, flowing moustache, and hair that curled, although cut close, in conformity to military regulation.

The house, one of the handsomest in the town, stood a little back on the main street. It was built of stone; and with its deep eopings and heavy moldings of window and roof, presented a grand appearance. There was a garden on either side, well laid out; and the walks, made of fine white sand, glistened in the moonlight. Great trees, in full verdure, flung their spreading arms up in the chilly air; for though the autumn had come, the leaves had not yet begun to fall. Through the branches flashed innumerable lights—every window was ablaze.

The stranger stood silent, as if in deep reflection. Then he walked slowly along, and entering the gate, moved deliberately around the building, making a complete survey of the premises, which the strong light enabled him to do. Through the thin curtains of netting that screened the windows of the great kitchen, he could see the servants flying from point to point. The glowing fire, surrounded by dishes of all shapes and sizes, gave indication that a grand entertainment was in process of preparation, while the savory smell that came through subtle openings made the atmosphere grateful and redolent of luxury.

The lieutenant watched the servants hurry to and fro, and muttered to himself—

"That's a goodly turkey he takes from the spit—brown and juicy. I warrant me the table will be spread with all manner of delicacies—the choicest wines, too. What's to hinder me from joining them? I'm my uncle's nephew, at any rate; there's only the slight difference of names, Sterne for Hilary, and I'm all right. Stop! if there should be any one there who knows me—I mean, knows my brother!—well and if there is, we look as like as two peas, particularly since I have donned this moustache and these curls. I think I'll risk it. Besides, in speaking of them, I heard that a Miss Eleanor Houston was there. Can it be my Nelly? To be sure, I don't know much about her, only that I have lost my heart, and I was vain enough to think she cared for me. Let me see. I believe my credentials are all right; my face has done me good service on other occasions—I'll try again."

The ponderous knocker sounded a summons. A servant in splendid livery came to the door. The gold lace, cords, and tassels that depended from his gay habiliments, flashed out on the night, and made the radiant opening from the street like a view into fairy land. Seeing an officer standing before him—handsome, erect, and smiling—the man bowed obsequiously.

"Is your master at home?" asked the lieutenant.

"Home, sir; but engaged, sir. He may be willing to see you, though, sir. Who shall I say?"

"An officer who brings news from an old friend," said the lieutenant, with dignity.

His manner overawed the pompous old porter, who opened the door wide, and ushered the visitor into a small side room. One gaslight was burning under a pink shade; the little room was as exquisite as the boudoir of a fashionable lady—hung with fawn and white; the sofas, chairs, lounges of antique pattern, covered with satin of a soft fawn colour, embroidered in white.

Presently a step was heard; the next moment a courtly personage, in a half dress, having thrown a velvet sash over his elegant garments, stood in the doorway. His manner was affectingly pompous; he was a stately, faded, handsome man of some fifty-six years. Bowing courteously, he advanced another step, while the military gentleman arose.

"I do not know what you, sir, will think," said

the new comer, with consummate coolness and an appearance of natural embarrassment; "but having only recently parted from my uncle, Colonel Montgomery, of—"

"My dear fellow, can this be Sterne Montgomery? Why, I'm delighted to see you; and am truly glad to welcome you under my roof. How long do you stay?"

"I leave to-morrow, sir; but before—"

"Tut, tut! Put down your cap, man—put down your cap. You're never going now—no, indeed; no, indeed. We're—that is, the girls—are to have a party and ball here to-night, and you must stay—indeed, you must; I won't take 'No' for an answer. You shall see my daughter and her cousin; fine little girls, both of them. Come—come, no denial. We keep very early hours, except on these rare occasions."

"A thousand thanks," said the handsome officer, rising again with a well-acted confusion; "but—you see how it is—I am travel-dusty and worn out, as you may imagine, and the duties of the toilet—"

"Tut, tut! no words—none at all; we've every convenience; you shall have a room, and everything that is necessary for your comfort. Besides, your name is sufficient to cover all incongruities."

It was not long before the young lieutenant entered a room blazing with scores of lustres; for not only was all the gas alight in the chandeliers, but dozens of silver candelabras gave the illumination of brightly-lit candles in every corner, from every bracket.

The flame was reflected in a hundred shapes in the deep, long, gilded mirrors.

It was a scene of enchantment.

The flower of youth, beauty, and chivalry were present; and the rustling and flashing of splendid broadsides vied with the radiance of lovely faces and the murmur of silvery tones.

The adventurous deceiver trembled for a moment as the announcement of his name caused a stir and flutter.

Some of that brilliant company he might have met before! But he was almost confident in his disguise.

In one sense, he was not mistaken.

Several gentlemen crowded around him, congratulating him, shaking hands, and expressing the liveliest interest in his welfare. These were persons he had never met before.

One face in the crowd caught his eye—that of an elegant captain of artillery in undress uniform—a pale, blonde, aristocratic-looking young man, with thin lips and a resolute eye, that gave the lie to his almost feminine contour of face.

Meeting this person, our hero felt conscious of a sinking at the heart; he had enjoyed more than one passage of words at a *table-d'hôte* with Captain Otto Walston, who was the professed admirer and affianced husband of Miss Eleanor Houston.

But, after a stern, surprised stare, the young man, who, suffering from a sprained ankle, did not move about a great deal, turned away like a stranger, and the lieutenant felt his courage mounting higher, and was now certain that his assurance would carry him over all difficulties.

His boldly roving eyes followed the imposing pageant until they rested upon two lovely girls, the host's daughter and niece, who sat in an alcove, talking with two or three young gentlemen, upon whose breasts and fingers glittered the inevitable diamond.

Eleanor, the elder—pale, elegant, bearing in her presence that inimitable repose that marks the true lady—was attired in robes of blue satin, whose beautiful folds fell in a large, gleaming circle around her feet.

As the stranger entered, the sentence she was forming hung suspended from her lips; a sudden—almost deadly—paleness overspread the whole face. Her dark eyes and perfect brow grew troubled; but the excitement of manner that almost immediately ensued prevented those around her from marking her excessive agitation.

Jenny, her cousin, had one of those faces that always seem looking at you with a laughing menace, however briefly they may glance.

Pert, piquant, glowing, versatile in expression, her charming little face was now ruffled with mock displeasure, anon all geniality and rippling smiles.

She was like a marvellous book, that, as you read, you wonder what extravagance or romance will come next.

She noticed the strange expression that crossed her cousin's face, and naturally turned to find a solution.

"Why, Nell," she cried, breathlessly, "there's an officer, as much like—like—why, what's the matter, Nell?"

"Be quiet, Jenny," said the other, opening and shutting her fan of exquisite workmanship so hastily

that the rich down was rudely torn and floated in the air.

"Oh, Nell! Walston's gift; how can you use it so rudely? Look at the pretty thing—you have almost torn it. But, ah! I see how it is. I have been told that this is a nephew of old Colonel Montgomery, and he is very like— Oh, Nell, Nell, I've found you out."

"Hush, Jenny!" said Eleanor, shortly, almost sharply; "how foolish you talk! What do you suppose I care for that stranger? We met, as it were, one day, and parted the next. See, your father is coming, and—"

Her quivering lips did not finish the sentence, for her father stood before them, with the handsome young officer leaning upon his arm.

"My daughter Jenny, lieutenant; my niece, Miss Eleanor Houston. Lieutenant Montgomery, children, the son of my dearest friend. Jenny, I leave him with you."

At that moment Captain Oltho V. Walston was finding his way slowly, and it seemed almost painfully, to the side of a splendidly dressed woman, who sat surrounded by her own circle of admirers. This was Mrs. Walston, a widow, who looked scarcely old enough for the claim of that young man who called her mother. No other lady in the room wore ornaments so conspicuous, or garments so rich. Her robes were of exquisitely lustrous velvet, of a clear ruby colour; while on her neck and splendid arms sparkled every flashing tint of the rainbow. No one could have guessed her age; she looked scarcely twenty, so well had she preserved her charms.

"What was the matter with Nelly just now?" asked this lady, as her son drew near.

"The matter with Nelly?" he repeated, and then his lips grew bloodless.

"Yes; as that gentleman came in—the strange officer—I saw her start and grow so pale that for a moment I thought she would faint."

"A sudden indisposition, perhaps," was the reply; "but is it possible you did not observe who that young man is like?"

"I thought his countenance familiar," said the lady, musingly.

"Don't you remember the young fellow, an artist, whose name was so much spoken of?"

"Oh! indeed I do—the fellow who haunted after Nell so. Oh, now I can see it all—it was only the surprise, my dear," she added, as she saw the young man's cheek grow bloodless, and his thin lips quiver; "he sure she cared nothing for that painter, and if she did, this is not he, you know. She will never, in all human probability, meet with him again. He seems besieged, does he not?" she added, following the movements of the young lieutenant with her eyes. "They say he is a very brave young soldier, who has risked his life in several cool adventures. There! go to Nell; he has turned away with some one else. Just rally her a little upon her supposed nervousness, and you will see her blush as brightly as ever."

CHAPTER II.

Ah! there is a ray
More delightful still—
Beams that softer play,
Looks that sweeter thrill,
Tis the eyes whose light
Sparkles from the heart,
Pours upon the night,
Joys that ne'er depart;
Tis the look that tells
Love is living there;
And like the fairy's witching spells,
Bids every scene enchantment wear.

SUPPER was announced.

The crowded room was deserted for the long dining-hall, festooned with flowers, from every wreath of which shone out a clear, bright flame. The pretty faces and brighter costumes of the gala guests enlivened the scene.

Lieutenant Montgomery was given a seat next the host, between a stylish young gentleman of feminine appearance, and a very beautiful young girl, who sat next some elderly gentleman. The rest of the company were ranged according to their position. Montgomery had hoped to be placed next Eleanor. It was not to be, though she was nearly opposite, and so pale that her sweet young face seemed quite blanched of all its roses, and her constrained merriment deceived but those immediately around her.

The richly-wrought glasses, shooting from tubes of exquisite workmanship, began to crimson as the lips of great silver flagons, after the manner of ancient customs—for the silver was an heirloom—kissed and filled them to the brim with fragrant wines. The touch of meeting crystal preceded its passage to lips as sweet and ruby, and then there was brave talk by the gentlemen and merry laughter among the ladies.

None were in better spirits than the bold interloper. His eye regarded admiringly the splendid service of

silver plate. The wine loosed his tongue, and he acted his assumed character to the life.

"Pardon me," said the youth on his left, who had a broad lip and drawl, "but I think—you don't remember me?"

"Indeed, I do not, and yet—"

"Think a minute, lieutenant; don't you recollect at a ball given by your uncle, what a great fright we had? Let me then—it with in Febawawy; my cousin on your right with altho prethent."

The lieutenant turned, confusedly. He needed all his wits about him. The beautiful girl on his right lifted her eyes once, and her cheeks were rosy with maiden blushes.

"Strange," murmured Montgomery; "and still—let me see—oh, yes—the name is—"

"Lansden," whispered the pretty lips.

"Upon my word, yes—Lilly, I think it was, Miss Lilly Lansden," he said, at a venture.

Fortunately he had by sheer accident hit the right name.

"I see you recollect," whispered the pretty Lilly.

"Of course I do, now I think a moment; but we soldiers, Miss Lilly, are so harassed and worried. The duties of our profession, you know," he added, heroically, "give us but little time for thought."

"Oh, it must be a hard life!" sighed the girl, tenderly.

"Indeed, Miss Lansden, you have no idea. By the way, that young cavalry officer is watching you very intently, Miss Lilly."

The cavalry officer was watching Lieutenant Montgomery.

"Oh, no," laughed Lilly; "Captain Walston has eyes only for Nelly Houston. You were introduced to her—isn't she lovely?"

"She is, indeed; and the lieutenant's brown cheek reddened."

"Deputed thame," lisped the young fellow at his left. "It's vewy well known that Mith Nelly would about as liffth die ath marry him, and sthilt they are forthing the match upon her. He is vewy wick—monstuous!—notth hith mother's diamonds—and Nelly, the's poor, I've heard, and dependant, and that thort of thing, you know. Tho they're going to thackwifthe her on the altar of Mammon. But I thay, lieutenant, what wath the name of that lady you were tho devoted to?"

"Oh, Miss Potter," said Montgomery, at random, tasting a jelly.

"No, oh, no; I'm thure that wasn't her name. Don't you remember there was a wace, and the waced and won the gold cup? You wath vewy thweet upon her, lieutenant, and I heard—well no matter, but it wath vewy pweety news, indeed."

"This fellow will drive me crazy," thought the lieutenant, "with his recollections."

"Yes, lieutenant, I thought her the loveliest creature I ever saw. She was a blonde—a thorough blonde, golden hair, eyes as blue as heaven, and such a smile!" murmured the prompt Lilly.

"Oh! ah! yes—of course—very beautiful!" muttered the lieutenant, who at that moment caught the dark eyes of Eleanor Houston fixed upon him with a strange, half-passionate glance that thrilled him through and through. Fortunately, the supper was at an end. The music struck up; and wheeling from the table with a bow more carelessly graceful than polite, he moved off with the throngs that were going to the ball-room.

In passing that way, a small ante-room to the right, the opposite entrance of which was concealed by damask curtains which the perfumed air swung to and fro, attracted his attention. He entered, with perhaps a vague hope of seeing Eleanor. He was not disappointed. Captain Walston had led her in there on her profession of weariness, thinking it would effectually conceal her from the eyes of Lieutenant Montgomery, whose strong resemblance to the artist he feared almost as much as the real presence itself. She had sunk down, looking most wretched, upon a small lounge that stood near the door. As the lieutenant entered, she half sprang from her seat, then sank back again, quite faint.

"Pardon me, Miss Eleanor," he said, still coming forward with a hesitating step.

"Lieutenant," she found voice to say, "I—I really thought—you—you resemble a friend I once knew—Lieutenant Sterne Montgomery."

This she said, her dark eyes bent on his face.

He leaned forward, his soul in that look, his voice hoarse with emotion, his cheek pale as ashes.

"Oh, Nell—Nelly—don't you know me?"

One low, quickly-suppressed cry, one crimson wave sweeping over cheeks and neck and bosom, one look in which was mingled almost idolatrous love and a wild, surging fear, and she was quiet, calm and pale again.

"Then I am not forgotten?" he whispered, his voice tremulous.

She shook her head, a glad light broke into her

beautiful eyes, her hand sought his as she said, rapidly, exultantly:

"Not for a moment."

"Thank God! It is worth all the danger," he murmured:

"But oh, Hilary—why are you here? They may suspect, and then—"

"They will find me ready for them," was the low response. "Fortunately, several have addressed my twin brother in me to-night, though I had to use skill in parrying their questions; but I do not think any one suspects. Oh, Eleanor, this brief moment is a blessing—such a blessing. How can I see you alone for a longer time?"

"I hardly know. There will be perhaps an opportunity—in the conservatory. Now you had better leave me. Captain Walston has been gone some time. He is coming here with an ice I requested him to procure. Hark, I hear his step. Remember—the conservatory—by-and-by;" and the lieutenant went through the curtains, found a pleasant walk that led to the garden, and hurried to bury himself in the midst of its sweets.

Meanwhile, Captain Walston, walking under the shadow of a cloud he saw not, but whose darkness he felt, came slowly towards the ante-room, followed by a servant, bearing an ice upon a silver waiter. His face grew luminous when he saw Eleanor sitting as he had left her. Perhaps he had a vague fear that she had been spirited away. She took the ice and began slowly eating, while he threw himself upon the hassock at her feet, which she pushed from her when surprised by the lieutenant.

The servant went out.

"Nell, my idol," he murmured, languidly, "you are not yourself to-night. Oh, my own Nell, if you knew how the slightest depression visible in your face affects me. Say you are quite well."

"I am quite well," she replied.

He started up, vexed—folded his arms.

"Nell, how cold your voice sounds," he said, with an irritation in his tone which he could not conceal. "What has come over you to-night? You are certainly altered."

"I am no colder than I ever was, Captain Walston," said Eleanor, a slight nervousness apparent in her manner.

"Ah! perhaps that is true," he murmured, mournfully. "Nell, I can bear this no longer. Twice you have put off our wedding. Let me entreat you not to deal with me so unfairly. Would to heaven that I loved you less, or you loved me more."

"Captain Walston, you know that this match has been forced upon me," she answered, stung by his manner. "You can neither call me cold nor heartless. I have told you just how I feel."

"Yes; but you promised to be mine—remember that, Eleanor Houston."

"I know I did; but I was driven to it," cried the girl, desperately. "I am not among friends, you know; and am an orphan, with no one to protect me."

"Eleanor, Eleanor, don't drive me mad!" he cried, while drops of perspiration beaded his white brow. "You will love me, for I shall be so devoted to your welfare. Nothing that money can procure shall be wanting to your pleasure. Once be mine, Eleanor, and I am not afraid but what I shall win you wholly. Do you look upon me with less favour because for a time I am disabled? I assure you it is only for a time; the wound in my foot is almost healed; my limping gait will not trouble you long."

"Can you believe," cried Eleanor, indignantly, "that I would think less of the man I loved for such a cause? You must, indeed, have a poor opinion of Eleanor Houston. Captain Walston, there is no use in trying to disguise the fact to yourself. I do not love you; and I pity you if you marry an unloving wife. Better invent tortures for yourself more terrible than those of the Inquisition."

His face turned deadly white again; he gnawed his nether lip, and the yellow moustache quivered. He drew one deep, bitter sigh, and muttered to himself, between his set teeth:

"This will kill me."

"Tell me, how can I help it?" she cried, a wail of anguish in her voice. "Can I lie? Can I stand before God, and say 'I love this man,' when there is no love in my heart? It is monstrous. Heaven would punish you for accepting—me for offering such a sacrifice."

The girl looked, as she stood there, more beautiful in her grief and indignation than ever. Captain Walston also arose. He took both her hands; he looked searchingly in her eyes.

"Eleanor, something of this I have seen before, something of this you have told me, but never so decisively—never have exhibited such repugnance. Shall I tell you that since that strange lieutenant came to-night, you have been an altered woman? Ah, you tremble! Eleanor, you dare not look me in the eyes. There is something going on I know no—"

thing of. I feel it in my very soul." And he threw her hands from him with a passionate gesture.

She had crimsoned, had thrown her glances down at the accusation. She did tremble, but not with fear or shame of herself, but with dread for him.

"Sir," she said, "that is a strange accusation; but I will be frank with you. In London, I saw the brother of Sterne Montgomery. We were much together, and—"

"You loved him," said Captain Walston, with a flash of defiance in his cold blue eyes.

"You leap at conclusions, Captain Walston, too quick," and the girl's lip curled almost scornfully. "I did feel an unusual interest in him, and had I remained, it is likely, it is probable—"

"That will do, Miss Houston. Pray don't stop to pick your words. I am not so dull but that I can understand. But curses on him if ever—"

His clenched hand was uplifted. At that moment the curtain was raised, and Jenny came dancing in. "Tragedy!" she exclaimed, with a light laugh, and the next moment was silent.

For in each determined face she saw something that turned her warm, loving heart to ice. Not that she wished her cousin Nell to marry Captain Walston, for she made no scruple of saying:

"Nell, I'm in love with him myself, and I wish he had liked blue eyes better than brown ones. Yet I don't think I shall ever suffer much, or die for any man."

Still, under her light talk, there was a heart that only his tones could stir—that slight, white-faced man with a yellow moustache, and she loved him in her childlike, impulsive manner, better than any one else in the world.

He turned to her with a strange glare in his eyes, and only said:

"Come, Jenny, dance with me; don't you hear the music? Eleanor is ill, and wishes to be alone;" and then he laughed, a cold, mocking laugh.

"What in the world has happened?" Jenny asked, taking his extended hand, but still shrinking.

"I want you to dance with me," he said, violently.

"Captain Walston, you know you can't dance with that lame foot."

"Hark! the music has struck up again," he said, in a quick, frenzied way. "Come with me, and see if I can't."

A few moments after, Eleanor hurried into the conservatory. The lieutenant stood there awaiting her. His face brightened.

"I've only come to tell you that I cannot wait a moment. You had better go among the guests. Your room to-night will be the first one on the second landing. Our guests will all be gone at twelve. At two, I will meet you in the great saloon."

He would have spoken, but she was gone.

CHAPTER III.

The sun was sinking in the west,
When Mary sought the birchen grove;
In snowy lawns simply dressed,
She came to meet her own true love.

To meet her own true love she came,
Just at the hour of gloamin' grey,
To light anow her virgin flame,
And blend with his her softer ray. *Percival.*

The revelry was over—the carriages all gone. Eleanor met Mrs. Walston on the stairs.

"You stay with us to-night, Mrs. Walston?" she said.

"By invitation of your uncle, Miss Eleanor," said the lady, bending her stately head.

Eleanor knew now that Captain Walston had communicated his disappointment to his mother. It had always before been: "Nelly dear," or "Eleanor love;" now it was cold "Miss Eleanor."

The house grew still by degrees. Eleanor's father had his sleeping-room, a sort of state apartment, at the extreme end of the large wing. He liked solitude at times, and his study and library connected with his state-chamber. Next his was Captain Otho Walston's chamber; and nearer to the hall than any, Lieutenant Montgomery's.

The clock struck one. The house was as still as a tomb. Jenny was asleep, excitement making her always more ready for the coming of the drowsy god. Eleanor had made a slight feint of sleeping. Now, however, she arose, attired herself in a dressing-gown, threw her disordered hair in a net, shining with bugles, and sat down near the window, looking out on the clear yellow beams of light that lay across the lawn.

Her future course was chaos—she had not shaped the rudest outline of a plan. Upon what mission the man she loved had come, she did not know. Had he dared all to see her? That was the sweetest thought. How very slowly the hour passed! It made her shiver to count the minutes as they dropped away into the morning. At last, at last, the welcome sound—two—struck out sharply upon the morning air. It was time. Moving without noise—she stopped for a

moment to see that her cousin still slept soundly—and then she hurried lightly and softly down the stairs. He was there. One burner was striving with its feeble rays to penetrate the gloom, as he came forward.

"Eleanor, how can I thank you?" he said, rapidly.

"Hilary—yes, this is Hilary."

"He had taken off the false hair that had been so artfully mingled with his own."

"And this is my own sweet Nell. Oh, I have been

so haunted with the fear that you had forgotten me. But I heard to-night that you were soon to be married! Is that so?"

"Hilary, I have been so helpless, so persecuted. I have been allowed no will of my own in the matter. You heard right, unless some providence occurs to prevent it."

"Then I will be that providence; and thankful I am that I am come in the nick of time," said the young man.

"How?"

"Oh, leave that to me. Only say that you are willing to trust me, only say that you will be my own wife, dearest, and I promise to lead you from this place to safety and honour. Will you promise?"

Eleanor extended her hand.

"From this night," she said, "I put myself under your protection."

"There was a step near them. In their wrapt devotion to each other, they heard nothing, saw nothing."

"Traitor and traitress!" came hissing through the gloom. "I know you now."

Eleanor turned with a low cry of alarm. Hilary clasped her to his breast.

"Eleanor Houston, I see it all now, and I hope heaven will in mercy grant that I may despise you as much as I have madly loved you. As for you, sir, who have turned your back on honour, on everything that makes manhood desirable, I give you five minutes to leave, if you can leave through locked doors, every key of which is in my possession."

Eleanor had fallen upon a seat, quite incapable of motion.

"Five minutes—why, that's a lifetime," said Montgomery, lifting the fainting girl, and imprinting a kiss upon her forehead. "Now, my dear, be brave and assist me. This little ante-room is over the front porch."

"Yes," replied Eleanor; "but then it is twenty feet high."

"All right," was the answer. "In two minutes I disrobe myself there and turn countryman; in three minutes the window will open softly; in four, you will go in and refasten the window on the inside; in five, I shall be out of sight, and you in your room up-stairs. To-morrow I will see you again; till then adieu."

His coolness and admirable courage reassured her. He was gone, the window opened; she put out the light and refastened the window, then flew up-stairs to her chamber.

Meantime the host had been unwillingly awakened. I should have said that Captain Walston had taken the key of the saloon; by the door of the ante-room which he had forgotten, Eleanor had made her escape. Her guardian was somewhat gouty, but very irate at the deception which had been practised upon him.

"I shall get my death of cold," he muttered, as the captain turned the key of the saloon; two or three servants, who had been hastily aroused, coming to the rescue.

"Why, this is strange," cried the captain. "The apartment is empty."

"Strange!" shouted the host, only he prefaced it with an oath: "I should like to know what you mean, Captain Walston, getting me up here to freeze for a wild-geese chase?"

The captain was confounded; the irate host would listen to no explanation; the servants searched the premises; it was a mystery.

"Miss Eleanor," said a trusty old servant, as she met her the next morning before breakfast, "a countryman called this morning, and said this parcel was for you, miss." And dropping a curtsy, the old woman left.

Fortunately, Jenny slept yet. Eleanor nervously untied the bundle. It was a complete suit of common, country-like clothes. On a bit of paper pinned to them was the following:—

"If I come to-day, it will be to change the programme; if I do not, meet me by the old place in the lane at ten this evening. This dress will disguise you."

"Nell, what's all this fuss about Sterne Montgomery and you?" asked her uncle, at breakfast.

Eleanor looked up in the greatest seeming surprise. The speaker explained.

"All I can say is, Captain Walston must have had a bad dream," she said, quietly.

"So he must, Nell, and that's what I told him, particularly since the lieutenant left a note, stating

that it would be impossible to remain, according to promise, as he had thought of an engagement that would take him to a certain place before daybreak; and John, the porter says he saw him go out last night, at twelve."

"Mem. John had been bribed. 'The captain was quite ill,' his mother said, frigidly; 'and ordered the carriage before luncheon.'"

"Nelly, don't things seem to be going on strangely?" asked Jenny, the same day. "I do believe you have sent poor Captain Walston quite out of his head. His mother told the strangest story about you and that lieutenant—and, Nell, she blames you, dreadfully—and I do think you are treating the captain quite badly. I'm sure I don't care whether you marry him or not; in fact, should a little rather not; but I can't help pitying him, poor fellow! I don't believe he'll ever love another woman."

"Oh, nonsense, Jenny; if I am out of the way, he'll fall in love with you."

"No such good luck," said Jenny, quietly. "In the first place, you can't go out of the way; and, in the second, my father is quite determined that you shall be provided for handsomely, as he says. So you see there's no hope."

"There may be, for all that, Jenny," said Eleanor, pleasantly.

"Humph, May bees don't come in this country in November," said Jenny.

"Oh, by-the-way, what are you going to wear to-night at Mrs. Wheeler's reception?"

"To-night!" Eleanor gave a little start. "I shan't go."

"Just because you've quarrelled with the captain," said Jenny. "He'll be sure to be there, because it's at his sister's, you know."

"Yes, I suppose so; but I shall not go."

"Oh, dear, I'm so glad!" echoed Jenny.

"Why?" asked Eleanor.

"Because you are so splendid in that white moire and lace, you always eclipse me, and I shall shine the bright particular star. Am I very vain?"

"No, I don't think you are vain at all," said Eleanor, laughing heartily.

The evening came. At nine, the carriage drove up.

"You never looked so lovely in your life," said Nell, raising her head languidly as her cousin came in to "show off."

"There," she said; "Jenny, come and kiss me before you go."

Jenny came and stooped over her quietly.

"Now, suppose," she said, lifting her finger—"suppose that's the last kiss I ever give you!"

She did not see that Eleanor's eyes were wet.

As soon as she had gone, Eleanor sprang from her seat and ran to her room.

She could have it all her own way now; the servants—even John, the porter—were in the kitchen, carousing.

John had stationed a little girl to watch and let him know if anybody rang. The little girl was fast asleep at her post.

The front door opened.

A meanly clad girl, with a flapping straw hat and green veil, passed out; closed the ponderous portals upon herself—for ever!

At the place appointed, a country cart stood, and its driver helped her to mount to the front seat.

The cart was nearly full of cabbages and potatoes. Everything was conducted very quietly; though, if Eleanor had glanced at the driver, after the first look, she would have screamed with laughter. The driver appeared to be verging on seventy—a harmless old man.

In forty-eight hours they were safe from pursuit—sooner than they thought to be; and on the same day Eleanor became Mrs. Montgomery.

A. M. D.

FRENCH OYSTERS AND FRENCH COOKING.—I think it was Mr. Weller, sen., who, when driving through Whitechapel, pointed out the curious fact that "poverty and oysters always go together." True as the remark may be in London, it will not apply in Paris, to which the coarser descriptions of that agreeable bivalve do not find their way, and where cheap oyster-stalls, with their tin pepper-casters and perforated vinegar corks may be sought in vain. The cost of the oyster in this capital confines its consumption to the better classes. Notwithstanding, however, the high price at which they are sold—generally from 8d. to 10d. a dozen—enormous quantities are eaten. It has been calculated that 7,000 to 8,000 baskets are daily emptied in Paris. Every basket contains 150 oysters; so that nearly 1,200,000 are daily opened and swallowed in this greedy capital. Thirty-six millions of oysters a month, or 288 millions in the eight months of the year to which the consumption of that mollusk used to be limited. Now, many persons eat oysters all the year round, under the belief that, owing to the improved cultivation of the fish, they may always be had in a fit state for food. Although some are used

in cookery, this is much less the case than in England, where oyster-sauce is common with various fishes, with turkey, beefsteak, &c., and the demand for stewed and scalloped oysters is large. Here the oyster is usually eaten raw, before or after soup, and a great many as the first dish of the knife and fork breakfast. Being on gastronomical subjects, it may be mentioned that the ingenious M. Babinet, of the Institute, has discovered the means of cooking without fire. He has just laid before the Academy the result of his experiments. His receipt is:—Place your food in a black pot, covered with sundry panes of glass, and stand it in the sun. The water soon boils, and the food is said to be of better flavour than if cooked in the ordinary way. But we are approaching a season when, in London, at least, it will hardly do to trust to the sun as a substitute for a kitchen fire.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LII. GUILF FOR GUILF.

Look like the time: bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue; look like the innocent flower,
But be—the serpent under it.

Shakespeare.

The next morning the breakfast parlour at Cader Idria wore quite a festive aspect.

A roaring fire blazed in the broad, old-fashioned chimney; deep red-cushioned chairs were drawn up on each side of the hearth; a thick red carpet covered the floor; and heavy crimson curtains excluded the wintry blast.

In the middle of the room stood the breakfast table, draped with its snowy damask, adorned with its best silver and Sevres china, and covered with all the delicacies and luxuries of the place and the season.

The room was as yet vacant.

Mrs. Llewellyn and her son, James Stukely, entered together.

The last named individual merits some description.

He was a long-limbed, narrow-shouldered, hollow-chested, sickly-looking lad of about eighteen years of age. He had a small head, covered with scanty, sandy hair; a long white face; a receding forehead and depressed chin that made his thin, aquiline nose look something like the beak of a bird; and light blue eyes of no sort of expression. He was dressed in a clerical suit of black, with a white cravat.

He was passing through college with very little benefit to himself. He was capable of being educated up to a certain low point, but not above it. He possessed a fair memory, but a weak understanding. He could recollect, but not reflect. Of him his classmates were accustomed to say that "He had not his right change;" "He had a room to let in the attic;" "He had a tile loose;" and other phrases popularly accepted to illustrate deficiency of intellect. In general, he was very easily managed; but when his particular whim of the moment was crossed, he became ungovernable; grew, in common parlance, "as obstinate as a mule."

Such was the mate proposed by Mrs. Llewellyn for the bright, beautiful, and intelligent daughter of General Llewellyn.

Mrs. Llewellyn was speaking as she preceded her son into the breakfast parlour.

"This escapade of Gladdys does not seriously affect her honour, you must know, James."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed the young gentleman.

"Certainly not. She believed herself a wife; and so, though the marriage was illegal, she must be held blameless."

"Extraordinary!" said Mr. Stukely.

"Arthur Powis is missing."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes; I told you so before. And it is not certainly known whether he has abandoned his supposed wife and at the same time deserted the service, or whether he has been robbed and murdered."

"Extraordinary!"

"In any case, Gladdys is free; was always free, in point of fact, since the marriage was illegal."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes; so now the way is clear for you to woo and wed the wealthy heiress of Cader Idria, and become one of the richest landed proprietors in the country."

"Extraordinary!"

"James Stukely!" exclaimed the lady, impatiently, "I wish, once for all, that you would discard that idiotic and very irritating habit you have of inter-

jecting 'Ah, indeed!' and 'Extraordinary!' into the conversation, and saying nothing else."

"But what do you want me to say, mother?"

"Bah! say anything to show that you have listened to, and thought about, what I told you. Say what you think!"

"Well, I think—suppose she won't have me?"

"She will have you if you ask her."

"Ah, indeed!"

"I shall advise her to do so; and she is so docile now that she will do anything I advise."

"Extraordinary!"

"There you are again!"

"Well, mother, what can I say?"

"Say what you think of all this!"

"Well, I think—suppose the other fellow should turn up with a revolver?"

"If by 'the other fellow' you mean Arthur Powis, reassure yourself. He is not going to 'turn up.' He is safe enough."

"Ah, indeed!"

"There you go again!"

"Well, mother, what shall I say?"

"Whatever you think, stupid! I have told you so a dozen times."

"Well, I think it is all very—extraordinary!"

Mrs. Llewellyn stamped with impatience; but the angry reply that arose to her lips was arrested by the quiet entrance of Gladdys.

Gladdys, with her face deadly white, and her form clothed in deep black, looked the spectre of her former self.

"Don't forget to kiss her, stupid, when you speak to her," hastily whispered Mrs. Llewellyn, as she left the side of her son and went to meet Gladdys.

"My darling, how are you this morning? Here is your cousin James, so anxious to see you and pay his respects," said Mrs. Llewellyn, as she took the hand of Gladdys and led her towards the fire.

"How do you do, cousin Gladdys? I am sorry to see you looking so sadly," said Mr. Stukely, snatching up the hand that Mrs. Llewellyn had let go, and making as if he would kiss her; but Gladdys drew back, and Mr. Stukely had not the impudence to follow up.

Mrs. Llewellyn frowned on him, and then rang the bell for the coffee to be brought in.

Gladdys did not speak; she looked vacantly from the mother to the son, and then sank languidly into her place at the table.

Mrs. Llewellyn and Mr. Stukely took their places. The coffee was brought in, and breakfast began.

Mrs. Llewellyn filled out a cup, and handed it to her ward.

Gladdys took it; but her hand trembled excessively, and cup and coffee fell from it to the floor.

"How very nervous you are this morning, my dear!" said Mrs. Llewellyn, in a tone that she wished to make compassionate, but only succeeded in making querulous, as she rang the bell.

Allie, as by previous arrangement with Gladdys, answered the summons.

"Bring a fresh cup and saucer here, and then pick up these pieces of broken china and wipe up the slop," said Mrs. Llewellyn.

When her orders were obeyed, she filled out a second cup of coffee, which with her own hands she placed before Gladdys.

And the breakfast proceeded without farther interruption.

"The day is so fine and bracing, that I think you had better take a drive this morning, Gladdys. What do you say?" inquired the lady.

"If you please, aunt Jay."

"It will do you good. Your cousin will drive you in the buggy with great pleasure, I know."

"Certainly," said Mr. Stukely.

"Do you know, James, that Gladdys has not taken a drive once since her return home?"

"Ah, indeed!"

"No; she has done nothing but mope about the house."

"Extraordinary!"

"You must try to rouse her."

"Certainly."

"Gladdys, my dear," said Mrs. Llewellyn, as they all arose from the table, "you had better go to your room and get ready. We will have the carriage at the door in half-an-hour!"

"Yes, aunt Jay," said Gladdys, leaving the room like one walking in her sleep.

Gladdys went to her chamber and obediently put on her bonnet and cloak, and sat down by the window to wait. But she had not really the slightest intention to take a *ride-à-la-drive* with James Stukely.

Presently Mrs. Llewellyn entered the chamber, bringing a glass of wine in her hand.

"Here, my dear, you were so nervous at breakfast this morning, that you seem to require something to settle your nerves before you go for your drive."

"Thank you, aunt Jay. Set it on the table, please."

"You will not forget to drink it, my dear?"

"Oh, no, indeed, I shall not forget it."

"My dear, I will send for you as soon as the carriage is ready."

"Thank you, aunt."

"And—you will remember the glass of wine?"

"Oh, yes, I will remember it."

Mrs. Llewellyn left the room. And when she was gone, Gladdys arose and took the glass in her hand, saying:

"Oh, yes! I will not forget the glass of wine! I will remember it! I will take good care of it, for I understand it! And some of these days, Mrs. Jay, I may hang you with this glass of wine!"

And Gladdys took the glass, and poured its contents into a clean vial, corked it tightly, and locked it up in her dressing-case. Then she sat down in her chair, and began to turn herself to stone as fast as she could.

Meanwhile Mrs. Llewellyn communed with herself:

"I must keep her under the influence of the drug, if I wish to manage her. Already she had begun to recover a little, from not having taken it in her coffee this morning. If I had not given her a dose in the wine, by noon she might have become quite troublesome. I had better make sure that she does not forget to drink the wine, however."

And so, instead of sending for Gladdys when the carriage was ready, Mrs. Llewellyn went for her. On entering the chamber, her first glance was at the glass.

It was empty.

"All right! Gladdys has taken the drug," she thought. Then approaching the chair, she said:

"Gladdys, my dear, the carriage is ready."

No answer.

Mrs. Llewellyn stooped and looked at her.

Gladdys was sitting back in her chair and staring vacantly out of the window.

"Gladdys, my love, the carriage is waiting."

No answer.

Mrs. Llewellyn laid her hand on the girl's shoulder, and gently shook her, saying:

"Gladdys! Rouse yourself! Do you hear me? Your cousin is waiting to drive you out."

No answer.

"Oh, dear! I have given her an over-dose, I suppose! Or else, perhaps, its administration in wine has caused it to act more promptly and powerfully. Gladdys! Gladdys, my dear!" exclaimed the lady, shaking her ward roughly.

But not one word, good, bad, or indifferent, could she get from the statue.

"I have given her an over-dose! I must be more careful for the future. But, after all, a fine drive in the fresh air will be the best thing for her, if I can get her to the buggy. Gladdys!" said Mrs. Llewellyn, slipping her arm under the arm of the girl and attempting to lift her, hoping that she would mechanically obey the impulse and rise.

But Gladdys was a dead weight.

Mrs. Llewellyn dropped her back in the chair, and went to the head of the stairs, and called her son.

Mr. Stukely came sauntering up.

"She is in one of her strange moods. Give me your assistance here, James. If we can raise her to her feet and lead her down-stairs, the fresh air will recover her, and she will still be able to take her drive, which will certainly do her a great deal of good."

Mr. Stukely stared stupidly at the statue-like form of his cousin, and muttered:

"Extraordinary!"

"It is not serious, far less dangerous; so you need not be alarmed, James. She is often thus."

"Ah, indeed!"

"I wish you to help me."

"Certainly."

"Put your arm under one of hers, while I put mine under the other, and let us see if we cannot get her down-stairs, and put her into the buggy."

They made the effort; but Gladdys was such a lifeless burden, that Mr. Stukely dropped his half of it, and said:

"It's no go. She's not fit."

"What do you mean? Yes, she is. The drive will do her good."

"She's not fit to go; I can't take her," said Mr. Stukely.

"I tell you she will revive the moment she gets into the air, and she will quite recover when she begins to feel the motion of the carriage."

"I can't risk it."

Mr. Stukely was in one of his obstinate fits, and Mrs. Llewellyn knew that she might just as well attempt to move a mountain as to move him. She sent him out of the room, and soon followed him, leaving Gladdys to recover at her leisure.

Gladdys condescended to come gradually to life in the course of the forenoon. She joined the family circle at dinner. And as she felt well assured that Mrs. Llewellyn would not attempt to dose her a

second time that day, she ate her dinner freely, and without the fear of poison before her eyes.

Gladys acted skilfully—adroitly evading every attempt of Mrs. Llewellyn to administer a sedative or to force her into a *tête-à-tête* with James Stukely. And, in the absence of the deadly drug, her mind rapidly regained its healthy tone.

But, in the same proportion that her intellect recovered power and her will strength, her anxiety and distress at her husband's mysterious disappearance and prolonged absence revived and increased.

She remembered, however, that a man of Arthur Powis's rank and profession could not disappear from the world without creating the greatest sensation, and setting on foot the most diligent investigation. She remembered also that she had been enticed away from the city, and entrapped in this remote country house, before she had had any opportunity of joining in the search for her missing husband.

And so she resolved to write to the Admiralty, and also to the captain of his ship, entreating them to inform her what, if any, intelligence had been received of the missing lieutenant.

And she entrusted the letters written, to Ailie, to be posted.

She knew that more than a week must elapse before she could hope for answers, and she resolved to bear the suspense as well as she could.

But as day followed day without bringing her any comfort, her anxiety and distress increased. And the most difficult part of her acting was to conceal from the lynx eyes of Mrs. Llewellyn this growing mental anguish, that must certainly, if perceived, have aroused that lady's mind to a suspicion of the truth.

Meanwhile Christmas-day drew near—Christmas-day, which Mrs. Llewellyn had resolved to desecrate with the forced nuptials of her ward with her son.

In everything, except one, Gladys was all apathetic docility; and Mrs. Llewellyn believed her to be still under the influence of the drugs which she supposed that she daily administered, but which Gladys always contrived to evade. That one thing to which Gladys would not submit was the marriage engagement to James Stukely. To every other proposition she answered, indifferently, "Yes," "If you like," or "Just as you please." But to this one she always replied, "No," "I will not," or "I'll die first."

"It is very provoking," said Mrs. Llewellyn, to her promising son. "I can get her to do anything in the world I ask her to do, except to consent to marry you."

"Extraordinary!" said Mr. Stukely. "But never mind! The preparations for the wedding shall go on all the same as if she had consented and when all is ready I will dress her, and lead her down before the parson. And she will obey mechanically, and be married before she knows it."

"Not if I know it, she won't," said Mr. Stukely. "Why? what now?" demanded his mother.

"I want her to love me first."

"To love you, you stupid blockhead! What difference does it make whether she loves you or not?"

"A good deal to me."

"Do you love her, then?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, then, I will tell you this, for your comfort, James, that twelve months after marriage it does not matter in the least degree whether the couple have married for love or for convenience."

"Ah, indeed!"

"No; because in twelve months after marriage, by the mere process of living together, the love of those who married for love will have cooled down to friendship; and in the same space of time the indifference of those who married for convenience will, by the same process, have warmed up to friendship."

"Extraordinary!"

"And I will tell you another thing—people that marry in positive dislike to each other often love after marriage."

"Do they though now, really?"

"Yes; and such will be the case with you and Gladys."

"I don't dislike her; but she does me, I know."

"She won't dislike you after marriage."

"If I thought that, I would risk it."

"You may take your mother's word for it, my son. I know women, and I know Gladys more than all women."

"Extraordinary!"

CHAPTER LIII.

THE FOILER FOILED.

Do I not in plainest truth
Tell you—I do not and I cannot love you?

Repulse upon repulse met ever—
He gives not o'er, tho' desperate of success.

Shakespeare.

Milton.

Mrs. LLEWELLYN kept her word, and vigorously

pushed forward the preparations for the wicked wedding.

A special license was procured. The services of the Rev. Mr. Kellogg—an old, imbecile, and superannuated minister, who had long retired from the pulpit—were engaged. And the ceremony was arranged to be performed in the drawing-room of Cader Idris, at an early hour on the morning of Christmas-day.

Mrs. Llewellyn's motives in the selection of time, place, and minister were obvious. In the privacy of their secluded home, where few ever now intruded; and on the forenoon of Christmas-day, when all the rest of the world would be at church, they would surely be safe from observation and interruption—a desideratum "devoutly to be wished," in case, at the last moment, Gladys should break out into open rebellion. And the doting old minister, pleased to the soul to be unexpectedly called upon once more to perform one of the pleasantest duties of his profession, was too blind, deaf, and credulous to be dangerous. He would entertain no dark suspicions, ask no ugly questions, and make no public scandal under any circumstances whatever. At least, so thought Mrs. Llewellyn.

On the morning of Christmas-eve, everything was ready. In the evening of the same day Ailie went up into her young mistress's room, and locked the door on the inside. Then, using her long-accustomed privilege, she drew a low chair to her mistress's feet, sat down on it, and said:

"I have been trying to get a chance to come and talk with you all this day, Miss Gladys; but I haven't been able to slip away from the madam until now. And now, Miss Gladys, how far are you going to let this nonsense, begging your pardon, go on?"

Gladys smiled ambiguously, but did not at once reply.

"Do you know that everything is ready?"

"Is it, Ailie?"

"I believe you! You haven't been down-stairs today, so you haven't seen anything."

"I have not been well, and Mrs. Jay has graciously allowed me to keep my room."

"Yes; she told us down-stairs that it was the best thing for you to do; and that all brides kept themselves secluded before marriage! But that wasn't what I was going to tell you. I was going to tell you what they've been doing down-stairs. First of all, they've redecorated the drawing-room most beautiful, with all the flowers out of the green-house."

"I am afraid they have redecorated the green-house to decorate the drawing-room," replied Gladys.

"Well, yes; I believe it is decorate; though why they should call it 'deck' seeing it ain't a ship, I don't know! And they've set such a breakfast-table in the dining-room! with a pound-cake on it about a yard and a half high; which whoever hex'd, of a pound-cake for breakfast? I do think the old madam is getting silly."

"I believe pound-cakes are usual at wedding-breakfasts, Ailie!"

"Well, I think it's contemptuous. But that's neither here nor there! Well, and Mr. James Stukely's wedding-suit is come home—which it is blue broad-cloth, lined with white satin, and with embroidered blue silk buttons!"

"How fine!" said Gladys.

"Yes! and yours is come, which it's white satin trimmed with white lace flounces, with a white veil and wreath. And which the old madam was just about to have it fetched up to you, to see it tried off herself, when, lo and behold! who should drive up but that there old parson; Mr.—Mr.—I forget his ugly name."

"What old parson, Ailie?"

"Him as was bespoken to, for to perform the marriage ceremony; which much good may it do him! Mr.—Mr.—Lor, you know who I mean—him as was superannuated out of the pulpit for being too old to preach, about ten years ago come next Easter; which it was the first time as ever I heard tell as old age was a sin in anybody, let alone a minister."

"Oh! you mean Mr. Kellogg?"

"Yes, Mr. Kill-hog; and a pretty name that for a reverend parson! Well, anyways, he's come over-night, so as to be here early enough in the morning. And the old madam showed him the licence, and I saw her do it."

"What did he say, Ailie?"

"Well, he read it to himself, he did; and he said, says he, 'A hum-hum, and a ha-ha!' And the old madam says, says she, 'Quite so, sir; you are quite right.' And then I came away; for I was perfectly disgusted to hear how that poor old fellow hummed, and ha'd, and drivelled; and how that old cat—begging your pardon, Miss Gladys—foolled and flattered of him. And then I took the opportunity, which it is the first one I have had this live-long day, to come up here and talk with you."

"It was thoughtful of you, Ailie."

"And now I ask you again, and I want you to

answer me—How long are you going to let this foolishness go on?"

Again Gladys smiled dubiously, as she answered: "Just as long as I please, Ailie, and no longer. I have told Mrs. Llewellyn that I will not marry James Stukely; but I have told her so without excitement, and so she does not believe that I am in earnest. She thinks from my calmness that I am still under the influence of her drugs, still indifferent, still apathetic to fatality; and that if she should give me an extra dose at the last hour, she will be able to fool me into doing exactly what she wishes. Well, I will humour her to a certain extent. I will allow her to deceive herself. I will allow her to take me before the minister. But then, Ailie, you will see what will happen!"

"I wouldn't let things go as far as that. Indeed, I wouldn't. It's dangerous play venturing too near the edge of the precipice, and that I can tell you."

"I can take care of myself, Ailie."

"Well, I'm not so sure about that; so I shall pray to-night that the Lord will take care of you. Mercy on us! if there ain't the old madam coming out of the parlour now; and I daresay she's making' for this room, so I must run away," said Ailie, making good her retreat.

Mrs. Llewellyn soon after entered, followed by one of the younger maid-servants, bearing the bridal-dress. "Here, my dear, I wish you to try this on," said the lady.

Gladys arose with a smile, divested herself of her mourning robes, and allowed her aunt to array her in bridal costume, placing the veil over her head and the wreath on her brow.

"The effect is beautiful," said the lady, leading her docile ward up to a tall dressing-glass. "Look, my dear!"

Gladys glanced at the reflection of her form in the mirror and smiled—a strange, ambiguous, threatening smile, if Mrs. Llewellyn could have read it aright.

"You will be reasonable now, my dear, I hope, and reconcile yourself to a measure in which your honour and happiness are concerned. Will you not?"

"I will do almost anything you wish me to do, aunt Jay."

"That is right. That is the way in which I like to hear you speak."

"What is it you wish me to do now?"

"Nothing now. Something to-morrow. Good night, love," replied Mrs. Jay, kissing her.

"She is coming to life again. She is asking questions. I must give her a heavier dose to-morrow," said the lady, as she left the room.

A brighter Christmas-day than that on which the wicked wedding was arranged to take place never dawned. A heavy snow had fallen during the night, and covered the ground thickly with a bridal mantle of pure white. Towards morning the sky had cleared off very cold, and the frost had adorned every tree and bush with crusted clusters of pearls and diamonds; so that when the sun arose, the whole scene was lighted up with dazzling splendour.

Within the house all was bustle and preparation. The members of the household were early astir. In the drawing-room a white marble table was arranged and decorated as an altar; and the "Church Service," the marriage license, and the wedding-ring laid ready upon it. In the dining-room a luxurious breakfast was prepared for a small party. And in the little morning-room a preliminary meal was laid for three—Mrs. Llewellyn, Mr. Kellogg, and Mr. Stukely.

Within the chamber of Gladys all continued dark and still. She had not been able to compose herself to sleep until long after midnight; and when she did so, she slept until a late hour in the morning. It was ten o'clock when she rang her bell.

Ailie answered the summons, bringing with her a tray, upon which was arranged a delicate and tempting repast.

"Here, my dear, I out-witted the old madam this morning. I have got your breakfast with my own hands before she came down, so as to have it ready to put on the tray and fetch right up to you the minute you rung your bell, before she could send you up any poison. And, fortunate, she is at the present moment of time in her own room a dressing for the ceremony. And so now you can enjoy your eating without the fear of being poisoned," said Ailie, as she set the tray upon the stand.

"I thank you, Ailie; you are very thoughtful," said Gladys, as she arose. She bathed her face and hands, threw on a dressing-gown, and sat down to drink her chocolate.

"Now, you know, when old madam sends up her fixed-up breakfast for you, you can just let her know, quiet like, as you have been beforehand with her."

"Yes, Ailie. Oh, how long is this state of things to last? How long must I eat and drink, and even sleep, in the constant fear of treachery?"

"Lord knows, for I don't. I'm going to ask for a

holiday this precious Christmas-day, as ever was; and I'm going to see if there is any letters for you at the post office."

"Thank you, Allie. Oh, do, do; this suspense is horrible."

"Think I don't know that? But don't fret more than you can help; it don't do no good. Eat your wittles, and live in hopes of hearing good news."

"I will try to do so, Allie; you need not wait. You may leave these things here. They will prove to Mrs. Jay that I have forestalled her."

"Very well, my dear. Ring when you want me again," said Allie; and she left the room.

Not long after, Mrs. Llewellyn entered the room. She was beautifully dressed in a lavender-coloured moire antique, with a black lace mantle. She was followed by her own maid, bearing a well-covered tray.

"Good morning, my dear. I hope you rested well last night. Here is your breakfast. Set it down, Maria."

"I thank you, aunt Jay; but I have breakfasted already. See there," said Gladys, pointing to the remnants of her meal.

"Allie is too officious. What did she bring you here? Chocolate! That is very improper in your delicate state of health! much too heavy! Here! Maria, take all these things away, and then come back and help to dress your young lady," said Mrs. Llewellyn, in a tone of vexation.

The girl did as she was bid; and, after removing both breakfast services, and laying out all the bridal finery, she stood waiting further orders.

"Come, Gladys, it is time to dress yourself, my love."

"Well, aunt Jay, I will dress. I will do anything you wish me to do, except one."

"You will do all that is right, my dear. But you look pale. I must bring you a glass of wine, to give you some strength before you begin," said Mrs. Llewellyn, leaving the room for the purpose.

Gladys looked after her with a bitter smile, and then walked slowly up to the fireplace, and leaned her elbow on the mantle-shelf. There was a design in the attitude that Gladys took.

Presently Mrs. Llewellyn came, bringing a large glass of port wine, which she put into the hand of her ward, saying:

"Drink it, my dear; it will revive you."

"Wine often does revive me when I am faint. What a fine bouquet this has," said Gladys, receiving the glass, putting it to her nose, and inhaling the aroma with apparent satisfaction.

Mrs. Llewellyn, little suspecting the purpose of Gladys, turned away to arrange some of the bridal finery.

Gladys continued to sniff at the wine (which, of course, she knew to be drugged), and to watch the motions of Mrs. Llewellyn as they were reflected in the mantle-glass.

Presently she saw Mrs. Llewellyn turn her back, and stoop over the bridal dress to do something to it. Then, in an instant, Gladys poured the contents of the wine-glass into the ashes under the grate, and raised the empty glass to her lips, and pretended to drain it just as Mrs. Llewellyn turned again.

"Come, dear, are you ready?"

"Yes, aunt Jay."

Now commenced a skilful piece of acting. Gladys seated herself in her dressing chair, and became perfectly quiescent, while they tortured her straight black hair into ripples and plaits, and while they pearl-powdered and rouged her pure pale face. And when they told her to stand up and have her dress put on, she obeyed like an automaton. The veil and wreath were added; the gloves slipped on; the bouquet placed in her hand, and she was pronounced to be ready.

"And now, my darling girl, you will go down to be married—will you not?" whispered Mrs. Jay.

"Oh, yes, aunt Jay, I will go down to be married," replied Gladys, heavily. "But I will not be married after I got down, for all that," she added, mentally.

"It is all right. The drug works. She will now do all that she is told to do," said Mrs. Llewellyn to herself.

Maria opened the door, and held it open.

Mrs. Llewellyn led Gladys forth.

Mr. Stukely was waiting in the passage to receive her.

"Take her on your arm, James, and lead her down stairs," said Mrs. Llewellyn.

Mr. Stukely advanced and drew Gladys's arm within his own, saying, as he did so:

"Cousin, I don't quite know as a fellow is doing right in marrying a girl when he don't even know whether a girl likes a fellow or not."

"Never mind," said Gladys, coquilly.

"Well, if you don't mind, I am sure I needn't."

"All right."

"Oh! if it's all right, enough said; come along." And Mr. Stukely drew the arm of Gladys within his own, and led her down stairs.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE MARRIAGE SCENE.

If you oblige me suddenly to choose,
My choice is made—and I must you refuse.

Dryden.

THE lower hall was lined with the servants of the family, all in their holiday clothes, assembled to witness the marriage. They were drawn up on either side, leaving a way free for the bride and bridegroom to pass. There was not one smiling face among them. All were grave; some were tearful. Allie stood near the drawing-room door, where she could see all that was going on.

Stukely led Gladys through this array of domestics, on, into the drawing-room.

There was no one in the room except the Rev. Mr. Kellogg, who stood immediately before the marble table that had been arrayed and decorated as an altar.

Stukely led Gladys up before the minister.

Mrs. Llewellyn followed, and stood behind them.

The doors had been left open that the servants might witness the marriage.

The minister was a tall, finely-formed, most reverend-looking patriarch, whose mild blue eyes beamed with benevolence, whose fair, noble features were seamed with many wrinkles, and whose long white hair, parted over his forehead, rolled down each side in flowing silvery locks upon his black cassock. He smiled the feeble smile of age, upon the young couple before him, and murmured to himself, as if thinking aloud:

"Why, I married her grandmother; and I married her mother; and now to think that I should live to marry her!"

"Extraordinary!" muttered the bridegroom in reply, although nobody had spoken to him.

"Be so good as to commence the ceremony, if you please, sir. My ward is not well, and may not be able to bear the fatigue of standing long," said Mrs. Llewellyn.

The old minister bowed gravely in reply; and then opened the book, and in an impressive voice began to read the preliminary exordium.

Gladys allowed him to proceed until he arrived at these words:

"If any person here present can show just cause why this man and this woman may not lawfully be joined together, let them now declare it, or else for ever after hold their peace."

During the short pause that followed, Gladys turned and looked steadfastly into the face of Mrs. Llewellyn; but the eyes of that lady were gravely bent upon the ground.

The minister proceeded with the ceremony. Addressing now the young pair before him, he entered the solemn adjuration of the ritual:

"I require and charge you both, as ye shall answer on the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment why ye may not be lawfully joined together in matrimony, ye do now confess it."

"I will!" said Gladys, suddenly tearing off her bridal veil and wreath, and casting them from her.

The old minister dropped his book, and stared with astonishment. Though he had distinctly challenged this interruption, he had not expected it.

The bridegroom muttered, "Extraordinary!"

The servants pressed in from the hall, to see what was the matter.

Mrs. Llewellyn laid her hand heavily upon the shoulder of the bride; and in a deep, low, stern voice, whispered:

"Gladys! what are you about? Be silent until you are told to speak, and then speak as you are told."

Then, turning to the minister, she said aloud:

"Proceed with the ceremony, sir. My ward is only eccentric and capricious; surely you know that before? It is useless to pay any attention to what she says. Proceed."

"I married her grandmother, I married her mother, and I have lived long enough to marry her, yet never did I experience such an interruption before!" said the old man, appealing generally to the room and the furniture.

"Extraordinary!" said the bridegroom.

"Go on with the service, if you please, sir," said Mrs. Llewellyn, who had a confident and commanding way that usually compelled obedience from most persons with whom she had to deal.

The old minister mechanically took up the book to re-commence.

"Stop," said Gladys.

And quick as at a military command, he stopped.

"Go on, sir!" said Mrs. Llewellyn.

The old man looked helplessly from one speaker to the other.

"Listen to me," said Gladys.

"Proceed with the ceremony," commanded Mrs. Llewellyn.

"But I cannot until I hear what the young lady has to say," pleaded the old man.

Gladys lifted up her head. Excitement had brought back light to her eyes and colour to her cheeks and lips. She looked strong, spirited, and beautiful as she spoke.

"You just now, in the words of the ritual, charged us both, as we should answer at the dreadful day of judgment, if either of us knew any cause why we could not lawfully be united, now to confess it. I will! I have waited long for the opportunity to speak. I gladly embrace it."

"She is mad—perfectly mad! Pray, sir, pay no attention to her ravings, but proceed with the ceremony," said Mrs. Llewellyn.

"But, my good lady, if the young girl is mad, she is incompetent to marry," objected the minister, closing his book, and laying it on the table.

"Oh, sir, hear me at least before you judge me. You say you were the friend of my mother and even of my grandmother. Oh, sir, if you were really so, pity and save their orphan child!" pleaded Gladys.

"My dear, you may trust me; I desire nothing more than to do you good," said the old man, mildly. "Though why you should come before me to be married, and then suddenly object to the proceedings, of course I cannot imagine."

"Who can imagine the why and wherefore of a lunatic's actions," sneered Mrs. Llewellyn.

"My good madam, if the young lady is a lunatic, you should never have permitted her to place herself in this position."

"Sir, I am no lunatic. You expressed some surprise just now that I should have come before you to be married and then should have objected to the proceedings. Oh, sir, when you have heard the story that I have to tell, you will understand that in doing as I have done I lay my only chance of deliverance from persecution and danger. I consented to be dressed in bridal array and led before you as a bride elect, only that I might have this opportunity of disclosing my real situation to one whose very cloth obliges him to be just and merciful. Sir, that lady there, who would force or betray me into a felonious marriage, knows that I am already a wife."

"A wife! She is a raving maniac!" cried Mrs. Llewellyn.

"My good lady, if she is indeed a raving maniac she is as incompetent to enter into this marriage as if she were already a wedded wife. But let me hear what she has to say. Explain yourself, my child."

Thus encouraged, Gladys commenced, and poured forth to attentive ears the history of her marriage. And so long as she spoke of the events that had preceded the mysterious disappearance of her husband, and her consequent severe illness at Ceres Cottage, her story was clear, concise, and perfectly consistent, and evidently impressed the old minister with its fidelity and truthfulness. But when she came to talk of all the subsequent events, and her sufferings at Cader Idris, under the influence of drugs administered by Mrs. Llewellyn, her narrative grew obscure, rambling, and often contradictory, so that the old minister was shaken in his faith.

There were many good reasons for this difference in the style of the poor girl's narrative: The events that had preceded the disappearance of her husband had all transpired while she was yet sound in mind and body. The events that followed had all happened while she was ill, imperfectly convalescent, or under the influence of stupefying drugs. Therefore, her remembrance of the first epoch was perfectly distinct, while her recollection of the second was very obscure. Another difficulty in the second part of her narrative was this—that while speaking of the drugs that had been administered to her, she felt in honour bound to refrain from exposing the agency of Allie in discovering the treachery.

But the old minister, not having the key to the mystery, simply thought that Gladys was a little touched in the brain.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Llewellyn, as soon as Gladys had finished her narrative, "and what do you think of that?"

"I do not know what to think, madam, except this, that the young lady is not a proper subject for matrimony, and that therefore I must decline to perform the ceremony," said the minister, gravely.

"As you please, sir. But now, as you have lent a very attentive ear to this girl's insane imaginings, I require you to listen to my explanation of them," said Mrs. Llewellyn, haughtily.

"That is but just, madam," answered the minister.

"If there is to be another long story, let's all sit down. Standing so long is very wearisome, and cousin Gladys is ready to drop," said Mr. Stukely.

This proposition was too reasonable to be opposed. The minister immediately took the hand of Gladlys, and with the stately courtesy of the old time, led her to an easy chair, and placed her in it. And all seated themselves.

Mrs. Llewellyn commenced her defence.

It was a cruel story that she told of Gladlys and Arthur. She represented Gladlys as a wilful and imprudent girl, who had always given her parents the greatest anxiety and distress. And she spoke of Arthur as an idle and unprincipled fortune-hunter, who had basely betrayed the hospitality of General Llewellyn by winning the affection of his daughter. She spoke of their marriage as a disgraceful elopement, which had ended in the dishonour of her ward. She said that she had followed Gladlys, to rescue her, if possible, from a life of infamy; that she had found the miserable girl living among low people—deserted, ill, and nearly dying. She related that, upon subsequent investigation, she had discovered that the shameless villain who had eloped with Gladlys had abandoned her, flying, it was supposed, from a threatened prosecution for bigamy by the friends of his real wife, for he was already a married man; that she herself had seen and conversed with his wife.

She said that, after a great deal of trouble, she had succeeded in getting Gladlys safely home again; but that her sorrows had so shaken her nervous system as to threaten, if not to involve, her reason; that she, Mrs. Llewellyn, was unwilling to expose family secrets by calling in a physician; but that she had "ministered to the mind diseased" as her experience best taught her to do; and that this gave rise to the story of the drugs. She said, farther, that at length she had confidentially consulted a physician upon the case of her unfortunate ward, and that the physician had advised a speedy marriage for the girl. And also that Gladlys, previous to her elopement, had been the promised bride of her son, James Stukely; that this union had been a favourite project with both the girl's deceased parents; and that, as neither herself—Mrs. Llewellyn—nor her son—Mr. Stukely—had considered Gladlys criminal in the matter of the false marriage into which she had been betrayed, they had decided to pardon the past and proceed with the present marriage; that the girl had agreed to the proposal, and that it could only be from the caprices of an insanity much more serious than she had ever suspected, that Gladlys so suddenly, and at the very last moment, changed her mind.

"And now, sir," said Mrs. Llewellyn, in conclusion, "I hope that I have sufficiently refuted the insane charges of my misguided ward."

"I do not know what to think of all this, madam. I must take time to reflect. But of one thing I am sure, that the young lady is no fit subject for matrimony; and that, therefore, I have no further business here," said the feeble old man, rising and preparing to depart.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Gladlys, starting up and clasping her hands in agony. "Do not quite desert my cause! It is not for this that I came before you! It was to appeal to you for help, for deliverance! There must be some power, somewhere, that is able to free me from the control of a false guardian? Oh, sir! only try to procure for me a hearing, and I will thank and bless you for ever."

"My good child," said the old man, doubtfully, "I married your grandmother, and I married your mother, and I almost married you. And I would do anything in reason for you; for I pity you very much. But in this case I really do not know how to proceed. On the one hand, it seems only just that an orphan girl should have a hearing. But then, on the other hand, it seems insulting to this lady to appeal from her authority; for she is a lady of the highest standing in character and position, and she is the guardian selected for you by the will of your late lamented parents; and, as such, you are bound to obey her. I think, my dear child, that you had better submit yourself to her guidance; for she really seems to have your interests very much at heart—yes, even to the extent of taking you for her daughter-in-law, notwithstanding misfortunes that might have precluded any less just and generous woman from doing so. Be patient, my child; it is all for your good."

"For my good! For my good to be separated from my own true husband? For my good to be drugged until my heart and brain are both so softened that I have neither will nor intellect enough to save me from crime and ruin? For my good to be forced or betrayed into a felonious marriage with a half-idiot? If you consider these things for my good, Mr. Kellogg, you may go away and forget me; but otherwise, in the name of heaven and by the love you bore my parents, I adjure you, I implore you, intervene to save me! Procure me a public hearing!" exclaimed Gladlys, dropping on her knees, and seizing the hands of the minister in an agony of supplication.

"You distress me beyond measure, my dear child. These are but sickly fancies of yours. Your guardian

is your friend. The medicines she gives you are to soothe your mind and heal your body. The marriage she proposes for you is to repair the wrongs done you by another. Your mother, your guardian angel, could do no more for you than this excellent aunt is doing. Submit yourself to her," said the old man, trying to raise the unhappy girl to her feet.

"Oh, Father Almighty! is there no help in earth or heaven?" cried Gladlys, sinking down, overwhelmed by despair.

"Sir," said Mrs. Llewellyn, "this must be a very painful scene to you. And as your presence only serves to excite my poor ward, perhaps you had better withdraw and leave her with me."

"Gladly, madam. Poor girl—poor girl!" "Of one thing I must beg to caution you, sir. It is, not to say anything of the mad story told you by this unhappy girl; nor even of the true story related to you in confidence by myself. In fact, I beg that you will not mention anything that has transpired here to-day. For it is very painful to have family affairs canvassed by the gossips of the neighbourhood," said Mrs. Llewellyn.

"I understand you, madam, and I will be discreet. Poor girl! Poor girl! I married her grandmother, and I married her mother, and I had nearly married her. And to think it has come to this!"

And musing on in this way, the doting old person departed, leaving Gladlys once more in Mrs. Llewellyn's sole power.

(To be continued.)

THE ARCHDUKE.

A TALE OF THE MEXICAN EMPIRE.

CHAPTER VII.

Here upon this head,
So lovely in its maiden bloom, will I
Let fall the garland of a life of war;
Nor deem it lost, if only I can wreath it
Around those beautiful brows.

Schiller.

As Captain Valde had foreseen, the cattle and horses driven before the savages occupied the ruins near his own horse, and effectually screened it from their notice. As he had also expected, the Indians instantly set about preparing their supper of broiled meat, kindling fires, spreading their blankets, appointing guards, and making their usual arrangements for passing the night there. On several occasions, some of the savages passed within a few feet of him, looking for a covert in which to spread their blankets; but his presence was not detected, and he became more and more hopeful, from moment to moment, of being able to do something for the beautiful captive.

Just as twilight commenced spreading over the landscape, the watcher saw the prisoner rouse herself from her sad reverie and partake of the water and broiled beef that was offered her by an old squaw. A buffalo robe was soon after spread for her by Nani. She was tied to her attendant Lala, as on the previous evening, and she lay down in anguish and despair to muse upon her perils and prospects.

The evening set in with a clear blue sky, radiant with stars, and the shadows that mantled the earth did not become dense enough to shut out from Hernan's view the object in which he had already begun to feel an absorbing interest.

The Comanches sat around their smouldering fires, smoking and talking; the horses and cattle browsed among the bushes; the dogs sat around their masters or lay at their feet; the guards walked about the exterior of the camp, and the various other sights and sounds of such an encampment were prominent. But at length the women lay down and slept, the braves followed their example, the captive became perfectly motionless, and the dogs slumbered beside the ashes of the extinct fires.

The heart of the watcher quickened its pulsations with a sense of gratitude that he had not been discovered.

As the silence grew more and more profound in the camp, the watchfulness of Hernan became more and more acute.

He noticed that the guards kept their faces turned away from the camp, in the expectation that any enemy would come from that quarter, instead of being concealed in their midst, and this fact he knew was greatly in his favour.

At length, after an hour or two, of silent watching, Hernan resolved to take advantage of a friendly cloud obscuring the star-light, and softly crept from his concealment. The camp was not entirely wrapped in sleep, for here and there a stalwart savage arose from his recumbent position to procure a drink of water or to light his pipe by a dying coal, and Hernan hoped to pass for one of them.

He placed his revolver and knife in his belt, ready for instant use, and then crept softly from column to

column, keeping in the shadow of the mounds and pyramids, finally nearing the spot where the maiden lay.

And then, while he paused, wondering if she could be asleep, and how he could awaken her without attracting attention, he saw her, as if moved by a sudden instinct, raise her head softly, and glance around.

He stood perfectly motionless, with his finger uplifted, cautioning silence, when her gaze suddenly rested upon him, and their eyes met.

The maiden did not start or speak, but as she noticed his face and dress, and realised that he did not belong to the band of Comanches, a sudden thrill of joy pervaded her frame, and she looked eagerly and hopefully at him.

Glancing around him to assure himself that he was unnoticed, Hernan glided forth from the shadow of a ruined wall, in which he had been standing, listened a moment to the deep breathing of Lala and the surrounding braves, then drew his knife and deftly cut the cords confining the maiden to her attendant.

Without a word, with only a quick, admonitory gesture, Hernan turned on his steps, and Ada softly arose, following him noiselessly to the shadow of the wall, and then flitting with him from column to column, past sleeping warriors, terrible even then in their war-paint and array of weapons, deeper and deeper into the ruins.

And then they paused, Hernan to wipe the perspiration from his brow, and indulge for a moment in the exulting emotions of his heart, and Ada to press his hand in the gratitude of her soul, and to glance around her, listening for sounds of pursuit.

"We are not yet safe," said the guerilla chief, in a low and thrilling whisper. "Follow me, as swiftly as you can."

He led the way on through the ruins, at length stationing her in a secure position, while he proceeded to the spot where he had tied his horse, making his way to him through the midst of the animals brought by the Indians. He untied him, secured his blanket and bag of barley, and then softly returned with the animal to the spot where Ada awaited him.

"Hold him," he said, placing the bridle in her hand. "I will get another."

He went back, and finding that the horses were all secured in the usual manner by tying their heads together, he unfasted a group of them, and selected one that promised the most speed and endurance, improvised a bridle from the rope that had secured them, and then hastened back toward Ada, securing on the way his basket of provisions.

"The Indians' guards are stationed on each side of this knoll," he whispered, as he rejoined Ada, "to prevent the escape of any of the horses or cattle. There are no guards on this western side, but instead is a chapparral ridge, through which we must cut our way. Wait here a moment."

He placed the rope-bridle in the girl's hand, and left her, proceeding to the chapparral, where he used his knife freely, cutting a path through it, every now and then listening intently, but all continued still.

When he had finished his hard task, he returned to his companion.

"I suppose you are a good horsewoman, as all Mexican girls are," he said, smiling, "or I should not dare offer you my own saddle."

"I can ride very well," she rejoined. "It will give me no trouble."

Hernan accordingly mounted her on his own steed, he himself mounting the other, and then taking her bridle in his hand, he led her through the opening he had cut in the chapparral ridge, and out in the open plain, keeping still in the shade of the scattered ruins.

The noise of the horses' hoofs was not noticed, so many of the stolen animals being uneasy and clamping the ground, and the guerilla chief and his companion hastened away from the ruins with exulting hearts.

"We can go faster now," said Hernan, when they had left the camp a mile behind them. "We will keep to the southward awhile, and then make a detour towards home."

He paused instinctively, as a fiendish yell was borne to their hearing.

"The Comanches," cried Ada. "They have discovered my absence."

"We have got the start of them," replied the young man, "and this horse seems to be fresh, while yours is well rested, so we'll give them a chase. Cling to your seat, and come."

He struck the horses into a gallop, and they sped across the plain at their utmost speed.

They rode thus an hour or two, and then slackened their pace, permitting their horses to drink at a running brook, and then continued their journey, while Hernan said:

"They evidently cannot find our trail, and we are safe. They expected us to go to the east, I doubt not. In which direction lies your home?"

"To the eastward, señor," said Ada. "I am Ada Mar, daughter of Lorenzo Mar, who owns the Hacienda del Lago, where we reside, and from whence I was stolen by the Comanches."

"I have heard of him, señorita," remarked Hernan. "Your father is quite noted for his immense estates. My own home is not a great distance from yours—a little south of Zacatecas. I am Hernan de Valde."

"Hernan de Valde!" repeated the girl, in astonishment; "you are not Captain de Valde, the celebrated guerilla chief?"

"I am Captain de Valde," modestly replied our hero; "the same to whom you refer. And now, if you are rested a little, señorita, we'll strike again into a gallop."

They suited the action to the word.

For several hours they rode swiftly to the eastward, without seeing any one. Hernan's thorough knowledge of the country enabling him to take the most retired and secure route.

The moon lighted their way almost continually, revealing them to each other as they rode side by side; she happy beyond measure in escaping from the savages, and he almost as much rejoiced at having saved her from a horrible fate.

They conversed almost incessantly, Ada detailing the particulars of her capture and subsequent adventures among the Indians, and he explaining his presence at the ruins, with proper reserve, and discoursing with a wisdom and politeness worthy of him on the various topics arising between them.

And need we describe in detail the growing interest of each in the other during every step of this night journey?

Ada was so happy, so grateful to him, and she smiled so sweetly upon him, and conversed so pleasantly with him, that he would have had to be more or less than mortal not to be deeply interested in her. Her beauty, her late perils, her heroism, everything about her, threw such a charm over his acquaintance with her that he could not keep his eyes from her.

And Hernan himself, on the other hand, was so distinguished, so noble in his sentiments, so brave, so gentle and thoughtful—in a word, such a beautiful ideal of a man, that the maiden experienced a quick and all-absorbing interest in him.

Never before had she heard such a pleasant voice, or derived courage from such a manly soul, or looked upon eyes that so thrilled her.

And so they rode on together.

In the small hours of the evening, when their horses were jaded and panting, and when they had reached the heart of one of those immense solitudes of plain and mountain which characterize Mexico, the young man drew rein, and said:

"We must halt, señorita, and rest ourselves and our horses. I fear that you have had no regular sleep since your capture, and I have not failed to notice how weary you are."

He led the way to a little dell off the road, beside a shallow stream trickling through the wild valley, and added:

"I'm sure that we are being actually pursued, for no man, be he savage or civilized, who has once been under the spell of your presence, will willingly lose it. But, although Nani will do his best, I do not believe he will find us. I have revolved in my mind every measure he is likely to take, and have shaped my course accordingly. As the result, I think we have eluded the enemy."

"I trust so," responded Ada, as they checked their steeds. "How wildly beautiful this place is, and how secure and silent!"

"Yes, señorita," and he assisted her to alight. "We could not find a more secure resting-place in which to pass the remainder of the night. We are now in the centre of the great wilderness to the westward of Zacatecas—a spot lying off the great routes to Durango and Guadalajara, and reached only by bye-paths—so that we may reasonably hope that we are beyond the reach of the pursuers."

He had secured the horses in the edge of the bushes bordering the stream, and instantly added:

"And now, Señorita Mar, I am going to make you a house and a bed in a very few moments. Take a seat on my blanket, and you shall soon see how old soldiers manage these matters."

He took the saddle from his horse and placed it on the ground for her pillow. He next cut some small bushes for a mattress, and then some larger ones, which he planted in the light soil, with their tops inclined to a common centre, so that they formed a screen of sufficient thickness to keep off the rays of the moon from the maiden. Weaving a few additional bushes into the interstices, a very neat lodge was soon finished.

"Well done, señor," said Ada, who had watched his movements admiringly. "What a nice little house you have made for me!"

"I am well rewarded for my skill if you like it,"

rejoined Hernan. "And now we will have our supper. I suppose you have no appetite, but a few mouthfuls of food will do you good after our exercise and exposure. Fortunately I have some wine here, and here's plenty of water."

He produced his basket of provisions, seating himself on the ground beside the maiden, and they made quite a hearty repast from its contents, thanks to the eye the faithful old servant had had to his young master's comfort. The birds and jellies tasted delicious to Ada, after her late experiences of the low state of the culinary art among the Comanches, and it was with renewed hopes and spirits that she said:

"We have reason to be thankful that we are no worse off. I begin to think myself near the end of my troubles."

"Let us hope so at least. And now let me have the additional hope that you will gain the repose of which you are so greatly in need. Would you like a drink of water, such as it is, before retiring?"

"Thank you, I would like some, if you please. The wine does not satisfy my thirst."

He groped about in the bushes, and soon discovered what he wanted—a broad, deep leaf, which he formed into a cup, and filled with water at the brook, bringing it to her.

The courage and gallantry he had displayed at Los Edificios, and his chivalrous and courtly bearing toward her on their journey, had filled the heart of the young girl with new and strange emotions, and as she took the impromptu cup, and her hand touched that of Hernan, a thrill pervaded her being, that was in itself a delightful happiness.

And though the guerilla chief had seen many beautiful and queenly women, his heart had never fluttered under their glances as it now fluttered at the gaze of Ada's glorious eyes in the moonlight.

"Well," he said, pleasantly, when she handed back the empty cup, "you must now get some sleep. I am quite wakeful, and shall stand guard near your habitation after feeding the horses. This blanket will be a sufficient covering for you, and I see no reason why you should not sleep peacefully."

He arose, with these cheery words, conducting her to the hut, before which she paused to thank him for her rescue and all his kindnesses, in terms of the warmest gratitude.

"It's nothing, señorita," he said, with a glow on his handsome features. "It's a happiness to have served you, and a proud joy to have you here under my protection. You must pay me by going sound to sleep, and so gaining strength for the long ride before us. Good night."

He gave her his blanket, again pressing her hand, and she passed into the cozy little lodge, while he went away to water his horses, and to feed them with the remainder of the barley he had brought with him.

Ada wrapped herself in the blanket and lay down, to muse awhile on the events of the day, to discover new thoughts and aspirations in her soul, to find that life had suddenly become inexpressibly sweet, and to feel that there were still in her lot some things exquisitely beautiful, and then she sank into a profound repose, or a sleep that would have been profound, if a manly face and a pair of dark, admiring eyes had not filled it with dreams.

Ah, sweet and gentle Ada! She had discovered that she was a woman!

CHAPTER VIII.

Now go, old man:

This night must thou be off—take my own horses;
Her hero I keep with me—make short farewell.
Trust me, I think we all shall meet again
In joy and thriving fortunes.

The Piccolomini.

His horses having received the necessary attention, Hernan seated himself near the sleeping maiden, with a wakefulness born of the excitement which he had passed.

He did not dare to sleep, not feeling entirely safe from the savages, and even if he had been in no peril, he would not have cared for slumber, so full was his soul of his gentle companion. He had been charmed by her, surprised, enchanted. The providence manifest in her rescue by him had also touched him. And so, when Ada's regular breathing announced that she was asleep, and he realised what a charming confidence she had in him, a flood of tender emotions filled his soul, and he thought to himself that such a glorious little maiden had never before entered his presence.

At times, even the entire events of the night appeared to him like a dream, so that he was obliged to look at the hut, at the horses, and at all things around him, to make sure that he was not afflicted by a delusion. Yet there she was, the little charmer, just as her breathing attested, sleeping as soundly as if there had not been a Comanche in existence, or as if Hernan had been some giant protector, able to build a wall ever so high between her and every kind of trouble.

And so he had a happy vigil.

For some time he regarded the moonlight drifting down through the rifts in the trees, the patches of light on the flower-besprinkled grass, and the shadowy stream beside them; but although his mortal eyes were staring at them so intently, his spiritual eyes saw nothing but the radiant little being who was sleeping so sweetly in his keeping.

In his keeping! What a proud and happy thought that had suddenly become to him!

"How very beautiful she is!" he thought. "How brave! how innocent and artless! She is the very ideal of my dreams—a realization of all my yearnings and aspirations!"

He was aroused from his pleasant reveries and admiring thoughts concerning Ada, to the fact that something was coming through the bushes near him, for he heard a positive rustling in the leaves, and the horses pricked up their ears and snorted in the manner peculiar to them when frightened.

He was on his feet in a moment.

A louder noise succeeded; that of a heavy and floundering advance on the part of some object in the bushes, and Hernan was instantly relieved of many of his anxieties by it, its volume assuring him that it was not caused by the stealthy enemies foremost in his thoughts. The idea struck him that some animal might be approaching, but ere he could take a step in the direction from which the sound proceeded, he was further startled by the dull clanking of a chain.

This sound was sufficiently sinister, under the circumstances, for our hero to step briskly towards the point of intrusion, but he had not advanced but a few yards before a strange sight met his gaze.

Between a couple of bushes, parted by a skeleton-looking hand, a man's face was presented to him—a face that was startling in its unearthly wildness, and in the grimness of its misery. The tangled hair and beard, long and flowing, and of a colour between snowy whiteness and grey; the ghastly countenance, thin to gauntness; the hollow eyes, so burning and fixed in their gaze; the scanty and tattered garb, here and there hanging in shreds—all made up a picture at once strange and terrible.

"Good heavens!" was the involuntary exclamation of Hernan; "what's this?"

The intruder tottered forward, a chain rattling with his movements, and held up his hands helplessly, showing that he was handcuffed.

"A fugitive, an escaped prisoner!" exclaimed Hernan, with mingled surprise and pity.

"Yes, señor," responded the man, in a hollow and sepulchral voice; "I escaped, forty-eight hours since, from a dungeon up here in the hills, and have since been hiding from my enemies. I was sure I heard, in my covert, some horses passing and stopping here, and so I have come to you for assistance."

He spoke brokenly, like a man utterly exhausted, and in tones so anguished and despairing, that the young man thrilled with an answering emotion.

"Be calm—be hopeful," said Hernan, kindly, as the unknown fixed a wild glance of inquiry upon him. "In me you will find a friend and protector."

The long-strained feelings of the fugitive yielded to the assurance, and he threw up his fettered hands, falling senseless to the ground.

For a moment the guerilla chief knelt beside the unknown, scanning the death-like face; which, despite its lines and wrinkles, showed that its possessor was no common man, and then he lifted him in his arms and carried him to the brook, where he laved his face and hands, soon restoring him to consciousness.

"You are famished?" said Hernan. "Let me give you some wine."

He went to his basket, returning with a bottle of wine, and giving the fugitive a liberal draught.

"Do you feel better now, señor?" he asked.

"Yes, help me, señor, I implore you. What is this?" and he clutched at the basket Hernan had brought with him. "Food? I am starving."

"Eat and welcome," rejoined our hero, taking food from the basket, "but not too freely. You are indeed very weak."

He fed the man as tenderly as though he had been a sick child, giving him the choicest morsels the basket afforded, with more wine, and chafing his hands. He had not failed to detect a certain honest and noble air in the aspect of the stranger, and he instantly and intuitively felt that he was the victim of some gross wrong and cruelty. It was easy for him to see, behind all the wretchedness of the unknown, that he was the possessor of an honourable and high-minded character, and the heart of the young man warmed towards him.

"Thanks, thanks!" gasped the stranger, when the cravings of his hunger were partially appeased. "You have saved my life; chained and weak, I have not been able to travel far, or help myself, and must have inevitably perished." His form sank back upon the knees of his preserver, and a look of

utter exhaustion appeared on his haggard features, showing that he was now in the crisis of his suffering.

"Fifteen years in a dungeon," he resumed, in a wandering sort of way, "fifteen awful years, with my infant daughter stolen from me, and my wife left unconscious of my fate."

The heart of the listener awakened under the effect of these few broken sentences; they were so suggestive of terrible outrages and of years of torture and despair. "Let us hope, señor, that your sufferings are nearly over."

The stranger groaned, and returned, in a transient delirium, to the dominant ideas of the moment, ejaculating:

"Fifteen horrible years in chains, while my younger revels in my wealth. Fifteen years, without feeling the fresh free air, without seeing the face of my wife or my child. Oh, heaven! what an abyss I have traversed." The wretched man shook convulsively, and Herman involuntarily shuddered.

"It's all past now," he said, in a voice that expressed his sympathy. "Let it all be as a dream! Look away from the past to the future. Depend upon my assistance. Let me rid you of these chains."

"Oh, yes, yes! Help! Help!"

Touched by the imploring tone, and the man's eager face, Herman brought a round, smooth stone from the brook, laid the manacled wrists of the fugitive on a larger rock and instantly set about breaking the irons. He knew that they were hard, but also foresaw that he could break them, with more or less perils to the unfortunate man and a few moments of careful but determined effort brought the desired end.

"Oh, thank you, and thank heaven!" cried the unknown, in a tone of mingled exultation and gratitude. "At last I am free! I am free!"

He flung off the broken irons, and waved his gaunt arms in the air with a wild, fierce joy.

"And now to free your feet," said Herman, with sympathetic joy. "You will soon be wholly free."

With some labour, and with the infliction of some slight bruises upon the strange visitor, Herman at length accomplished the task of freeing him, and the joy of the old man became almost a frenzy. He wept, broke out in incoherent exclamations, and even raved for a few moments, under the wild sense of relief and freedom that came upon him.

"I shall never forget your kindness, señor," he said, as soon as he could control his excited feelings. "Will you tell me your name, that I may know whom I shall daily and hourly bless while I live?"

"My name is Hernan de Valde."

"A son of the Marquis de Valde, or any relation to him?"

"Yes, I am his son."

"I knew your father once," said the stranger, his tones deep and sad. "The name is a guarantee that you will aid me. I feel that I am in good hands. Hope is again with me. Long days of toil and wandering, without food or sleep, and hunted by my cruel keepers, the anguish weighing me down, thoughts of my scattered family and my wicked enemy—"

He continued to murmur a minute or two longer, in an incoherent manner, and then his voice died away in a deep-drawn sigh of relief, and he slept, his head reclining on the friendly arms of his preserver.

It was with a deep interest and sympathy that Herman realized this strange posture of affairs.

"Poor victim of wrong and cruelty," he thought, "thrilling with the strangeness of his situation. 'What terrible secret is bound up in his history and present position?'"

He glanced at the hut, and saw that Ada was sleeping as serenely as ever, not having been disturbed by the unknown's presence.

Despite the thinness of the stranger's face, and the uncombed state of his hair and beard, Herman now perceived, more clearly than before, how noble and venerable was his appearance.

"Fifteen years in a dungeon!" he repeated. "May his wronger be brought to punishment! May his wife and daughter be restored to him!"

What a strange vigil Hernan now had, considering the lateness of the hour, the loneliness of the scene, the sleeping maiden, and the singular stranger!

Half-an-hour passed.

The unknown moaned and tossed in his sleep, and was at length awakened by terrible dreams born of his past sufferings, but there was a milder light in his eyes, and a more hopeful expression on his features when he realised where he was.

"Forgive me, Señor de Valde," he said, arising to a sitting posture. "My weakness surprised me."

"I'm glad it did. You have given me no trouble, and must feel much better."

"I do, indeed. I'm quite myself again. Let me again thank you for your goodness. You have a friend with you?"

"Yes, señor, a young lady who was carried off by the Comanches, and whom I had the good fortune to

rescue. You have not been a political prisoner, then?"

"No! the victim of private avarice. My overseer, whom I had greatly trusted, took advantage of events when I was ill, and presumed to be near death, to shut me up and seize my fortune."

"A sad story! But now that you are free—"

"Retribution and restoration must come! I shall immediately commence a search for my wronger, and trace him out through all these years. Report to your father the events of the night, and say to him, at the earliest possible moment he can devote to friendship, his old friend, Navarro, will be glad to see him. Just now there is much peril around me—much to do, the events of years to investigate—and I will not weary you with explanations."

He arose as if to depart.

"But I can certainly do something more for you, Señor Navarro," said Hernan. "You will need money to buy clothes, food, a horse—"

"True. If you can aid me—"

Hernan hastened to draw out his purse, from which he took one or two gold pieces, for his own use, and then he handed it to the old gentleman, saying:

"This will meet your present wants. I shall report to my father, and trust that he will soon see you. Remember that we will serve you in any way or manner."

"Thanks, my young friend, and may heaven bless you for your kindness. I once had friends in Mexico, and dare say that I shall soon find security and protection."

"We are going direct to Zacatecas," said Hernan. "Why cannot you go with us? or will you accept one of our horses?"

"No, no—many thanks. I see my way now. The food and rest you have given me have started me hopefully on the stern work before me. Hoping to see you under other and brighter circumstances, I commit our respective destinies to heaven's holy keeping, and bid you adieu."

Hernan wrung his proffered hand with much emotion, and he turned and left the little dell with steps revealing a fair share of manly vigour.

Hernan was glad to note that his face and eyes looked so much better, and that he had become so much like himself.

"The name is not fixed in my mind," he thought; "but yet it seems familiar, and I am almost certain that my father uttered it often in my childhood. What a singular meeting I have had with him."

He threw himself on the ground near his sleeping charge, and resumed his thoughtful vigil.

(To be continued.)

THE match between Captain Machel and Mr. John Jackson to run a hundred yards, the latter to have a start of twenty yards, which is to come off at Newmarket on the 4th of November—200 sovs., h.f.—calls to mind a nearly similar sporting event recorded by Lord William Lennox in his "Fifty Years' Recollections." His Lordship, just after enjoying a most sumptuous dinner at Crookford's, when the culinary department was under the celebrated Ude, was challenged by Captain Spalding, formerly of the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers and Life Guards, to run a hundred yards, Lord William to receive a start of ten. As the captain had been the "Deerfoot" of the light cavalry regiment in which he served, the odds were two and three to one upon him; but on this occasion the knowing ones were doomed to be disappointed, as Lord William won easily. The above race took place in Hill-street, Berkeley-square, at 12 o'clock at night, and was attended by the late Count d'Orsay, Lords Fitzhardinge and Lonsborough, and a large number of the members of Crookford's Club, then in its palmiest days.

THE ABERDEEN STRAWBERRY TRADE.—As most people who are acquainted with the city know, the Aberdeen market-gardeners have for long been highly successful cultivators of the strawberry. In respect to bulk and flavour, the varieties of this excellent fruit grown by them will hardly be exceeded. Few people, however, we believe, have any very tangible notion of the actual extent to which the cultivation of the strawberry has grown. We usually think of strawberries in pints or quarts, not in hundred-weights or tons; yet strawberries by the ton have become an actual item of export, and during the present season the quantity brought into the market and sent southward, chiefly to London, to be manufactured into preserves amounted to about 35 tons. This is independent of considerable quantities used at home for the manufacture of "preserves," on the wholesale principle, and for ordinary domestic use, &c., which must have brought up the total quantity to something like 50 tons; and, if we take into account that a ton of strawberries is worth from £25 to £30 (probably only smaller quantities reaching the latter rate), it will be seen that this has become no unimportant

branch of market-gardening. It is a branch, moreover, that promises to extend. It is only a few years since strawberries began to be exported southward at all; but the demand is, we understand, very keen, and even beyond the supply, and contracts to the extent of 80 tons have been already entered into for next season, while some of the principal growers are considerably extending the breadth they have under cultivation. Of the strawberries preserved by wholesale "curers," no inconsiderable part are exported to the continent, and some even to India.

SCIENCE.

EFFECT OF ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE IN GUNNERY.—The French artillerymen in Mexico have recently found, to their surprise, that the angle of elevation used in France for their guns, for any given range, does not afford the calculated results; and have ascertained that this is owing to the diminished pressure of the atmosphere on the Mexican plateau. It follows that cannon may serve as a kind of barometer for measuring altitudes.

A NEW ALLOY FOR BELLS.—*La Moniteur Illustré des Inventions*, says that M. M. Micolan has just patented a new alloy suitable for numerous articles, such as bells, hammers, anvils, and other non-cutting instruments. The alloy consists of iron, manganese, and borax. The proportions given in the specification, are:—20 parts of iron turnings, or tin scrap; 80 parts of steel; 4 parts of manganese; 4 parts of borax. But it states that these proportions may be varied. If it is desired to augment the tenacity of the alloy, two or three parts of wolfram (franklinite) may be added. The iron and steel are placed first in a crucible, after the manganese and borax, and the crucible is then filled with charcoal. It must be poured rapidly into the moulds. Bells are thus obtained possessing the sonority of silver, and costing less than bronze.

TRIAL OF AMES'S WROUGHT-IRON GUN.—A contemporary states that the preliminary trial of the Ames's wrought-iron rifle-cannon, named the "Union," was made at Bridgeport, Connecticut. The site selected is about one and a half miles from the railroad depot, directly on the shore of Long Island Sound. A vessel had been chartered to measure by log and soundings a distance of five miles directly off from the shore. When the distance was reached, a signal was given, and the gun was fired at an elevation of about 20 deg., with a 16 lb. charge and one of Hotchkiss's 150 lb. shells, which passed beyond the vessel at least half a mile, throwing up a volume of water to a considerable height. The vessel was then anchored, the shore being six miles, and the light boat four miles distant. The shell was fired with a charge of 25 lb. of powder, the elevation of the gun being increased to 24½ deg. The flight of the shell occupied 30 seconds, and fell considerably more than a mile beyond the vessel. The recoil of the gun at the last discharge was a trifle over two feet. The manufacturer has orders from the government for 15 of these guns, which he will be able to deliver at the rate of one in every ten days. The gun is constructed on an entirely new principle, consisting of successive layers of wrought-iron rings compactly welded into a solid mass. The inventor is of opinion that the charge of powder may be increased to 30 lbs., so as to gain a still greater range. So far as this partial trial affords evidence, the "Ames" gun exceeds in range all American guns by about two miles.

VOICE IN FISH.—On this curious subject the Academy of Sciences has received a paper from M. Arnaud Moreau, in which he shows that certain fish emit sounds by an action of the nerves, just as voice is produced in the larynx of the higher orders of animals. The fish of the genus *Trigla* emit particular sounds, owing to which they are called grondias by the French fishermen, and gurnards by the English. Aristotle mentions certain fish called lym among the Greeks, and to this day the Italians use the word organo to denote a kind of fish which makes a noise like an organ. In the genus *Trigla*, the air bladder is provided with strong and thick muscles, which, seen through the microscope, appear striped, and receive two voluminous nerves proceeding from the spine below the pneumogastric nerves, and close to the first dorsal pair. The mucous membrane of the air bladder forms a fold or diaphragm, which subdivides the cavity into two secondary ones, communicating with each other by means of a circular opening not unlike that of the pupil of the eye. Examined through the microscope, this diaphragm displays numerous circular and concentric fibres around the opening, constituting a sphincter, which absorbs a number of muscular fibres directed perpendicularly to the tangents of the circle. Such diaphragms exist more or less completely in various other kinds of fish, and are their instruments of sound. M. Moreau proves this by an

experiment, in which, having killed a gurnard, he applied a weak electric current to the nerves connected with the air bladder, upon which the sounds so characteristic of the genus during life were instantly produced. The same result is obtained by exciting the muscles, but with a stronger current.

A NEW GAS ENGINE or gazomoteur, the invention of M. Belon, has been introduced at the paper factory of M. Anzin, near Paris, and has been favourably reported upon by the Academy of Sciences. It is stated that the machine possesses an economy equal to sixty or seventy per cent. It consists of three principal parts; an air-pump, a smoke-consuming furnace, and a motive cylinder. The furnace, when the engine is at work, remains closed, unless at the orifice by which the air-pump opens on it, and the one by which the heated air sets the cylinder in motion. It is so arranged that a quantity of combustible matter, equal to that which it consumes, falls constantly into it. A state of combustion is kept up by the air-pump. Part of the air passing from this rushes into the furnace, the rest combines with the coal gas, forming thus a gaseous mixture, the volume of which is far greater than that of the air previous to its introduction to the furnace. This mixed air acts on the piston of the *cylindre moteur* with a force proportionate to the increased volume produced by elevation of the temperature.

BRITISH PHARMACEUTICAL CONFERENCE.

At a recent meeting held at Bath, Mr. H. Deane, F.L.S., president, in the chair, the report of the committee on "Accidental Poisoning" was read by Mr. J. Raymond King.

After referring to the great interest which the subject of accidental poisoning had excited in the minds of members, the desirability of a thorough investigation of the question, with the object of preventing the recurrence of accidents, and the difficulties which beset the question, the report went on to state the course of proceedings adopted by the committee in order to make the discussion of the subject interesting and practical.

The committee thought it advisable that their deductions and remarks should be based upon the results of statistical inquiry. They carefully examined the cases of accidental poisoning, as reported in the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, from July, 1862, to June, 1864, inclusive. These are twenty-five in number, and may be thus summarized:

Ten cases in which the mistake was committed by the administrator, two by a surgeon, one by a wholesale house, one by a grocer's wife, and eleven by retail chemists or their assistants. The cases were elaborately detailed in the report; and after a careful examination of the merits of each, and an intimation that the committee had corresponded with many gentlemen likely to form an opinion on the subject, the committee came to the following conclusions:

1. That there are seventeen out of the twenty-five cases in which there is every reason to believe that a thoroughly effective poison-bottle would have prevented the accident.

2. That there are at least three cases in which, had the poison sold been folded in black paper, and labelled properly, the accident would not have occurred.

3. That 80 per cent. of the usual cases of accidental poisoning may be prevented by the use of proper precautions.

4. That only one of the 25 cases was the direct result of ignorance.

The practical suggestions and recommendations made by the committee may be thus summarized:

1. That to all persons engaged in the practice of pharmacy, the facilities which exist for acquiring a theoretical as well as a practical knowledge of their business, render it incumbent upon them to do all in their power to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with their profession, in order to future safety and usefulness.

2. That a separate and suitable part of their shops or premises be set apart for dispensing prescriptions wherever this has not already been done.

3. That in the dispensing department there be a repository for toxicum, or poison cupboard, with lock and key, in which should be kept all the concentrated and virulent poisons; or a small bottle of each, sufficient for present use, the bottles being filled from store bottles, which should be kept in another and larger store cupboard or room, as required.

4. That the labels upon all shop and store bottles be in future so placed that the whole of the label can be seen at a glance, on the plan introduced by Messrs. Ford and Shapland, of London, instead of writing round the bottles, as at present arranged.

5. That, wherever practicable, every prescription be checked by a second person before it is sent out.

6. That liniments, lotions, and all poisonous liquids be dispensed in bottles registered by Mr. Merikin, of Bath, and called "Merikin's Caution Bottles," as being

in the opinion of the committee superior to any other bottles hitherto used for the purpose, and that the labels be printed in red ink.

7. That the more concentrated and potent poisons, such as strychnine, morphia, prussic acid, &c., should not be sold in an unmixed state without a medical order, under any circumstances whatever.

8. That no poison be sold in a dangerous quantity by any assistant or apprentice, without the express sanction of the principal.

9. That every poison, in addition to its name, be distinctly marked "Poison" before it is sent out, excepting medicine dispensed from a prescription where the statement of the dose or use of it may be considered sufficient.

10. That dry poisons, such as oxalic acid, sugar of lead, red and white precipitate, &c., be invariably folded in black paper; and in addition to the name of the article, that a label, with the word "Poison" in bold white letters on a black ground, be securely attached to each packet.

THE CHANNEL FLEET.—We have been furnished with the following interesting return of the steaming capabilities of some of the vessels in the Channel fleet, as ascertained on two recent occasions:—On the 27th of August, in a trial trip of two hours, under full boiler power, the results were as follows:—The Prince Consort gained on the Hector, 3,200 yards; on the Defence, 3,880 yards; and on the Enterprise, 5,300 yards. The Research was not tested on this trial. On the 20th of September trials took place with half-boiler power, of three hours' duration, with the following results, the Research and Black Prince being included in this trial:—The Black Prince gained on the Prince Consort, 6,974 yards; the Prince Consort gained on the Hector, 5,475 yards; on the Defence, 3,300 yards; on Research, 19,644 yards; and on the Enterprise, 19,825 yards. As the speed of the slowest ship in a fleet must become the speed of the entire fleet in all combined offensive and defensive operations, vessels like the Research and Enterprise would appear to be misplaced when occupying positions as component parts of a British fleet in the Channel. An almost universal feeling is entertained by naval officers that for all purposes of warfare a slow vessel is worse than useless, as her career can only end in capture by the enemy.

VALUABLE DISCOVERY OF MINERALS AT RANKINSTON, AYRESHIRE.—It may be interesting for the mining world to know that the lands of Rankinston, the property of Robert Salmoud, Esq., in the parish of Coynton, have been for some time subjected to rigid examination by Mr. Lumsden, practical mining engineer, and with singular success. In a bore of about eighty fathoms, two black band ironstones have been discovered—the first three feet six inches thick, the second two feet six inches thick, with a stratum betwixt the positions of six feet eight inches. The first of these seams has been tested from the calcined stone, and three feet of it yields 65.3 per cent. of metallic iron; the remaining cleave of six inches yields 48 per cent. of metallic iron. The second seam is the Burnfoot position, and is well known in the district. In a different part of the same property, another black band has been discovered eighteen inches thick, and a brown stone about eight inches thick, at a depth of about ten fathoms. These have not yet been tested, but the samples promise well. Other minerals are plentiful on the estate, such as hematite ironstone, yielding 60 per cent. of metallic iron; limestone, producing 10 per cent. of metallic iron; and coal for any marketable purpose, viz., house coal, smithy coal, furnace coal, blind coal, and gas coal—the gas coal yielding 10,500 cubic feet per ton of volatile matter; also, shale, of which there is a large field, producing 48 imperial gallons of paraffin oil per ton. It may be stated further that samples of argillaceous, calcareous, and mussel band have been met with on the property as travellers, yielding from 30 to 40 per cent. of metallic iron.

STATISTICS.

BUSINESS AT THE BANK.—The amount of stock transferred at the Bank of England in a year is larger than many may suppose. A return just issued shows that in 1860 it reached 196,282,526l.; in 1861, 268,900,776l.; in 1862, 228,453,050l., yet the number of holders of stock varies but slightly; in 1861 it was 261,367; in 1862, 264,696; in 1863, 264,011. The number of persons entitled to large dividends has increased. In 1861 there were 529 persons entitled to dividends of 2,000l. a year and upwards; in 1862 they were 569; and in 1863, 585. At the humbler end of the list are 92,190 persons whose year's dividends did not exceed 10l. in 1861, 92,262 in 1862, but only 91,870 in 1863.

THE Board of Trade returns for the past month again present extraordinary totals. The declared

value of our exports was 16,274,269l., showing an increase of 15½ per cent. on those of August, 1863, and of 27 per cent. on those of 1862. Of this increase nearly one-half was derived from cotton manufactures, which exceeded those of the corresponding month of last year to the extent of 23 per cent. in value, although only to the extent of 4 per cent. in quantity. Hence a very large part of the augmentation in the sterling amount of our trade is seen to be attributable to the extraordinary point to which the price of cotton was recently carried.

THE STOCK OF COTTON.—The stock of cotton continues to be exceedingly well-maintained at Liverpool, and even increases. Thus the movement of the stock has been as follows during the past quarter, as compared with the corresponding weeks of 1863 and 1862:—

Week ending	1861. Bales.	1863. Bales.	1862. Bales.
July 1 ...	303,835	332,042	184,940
" 8 ...	281,377	317,800	156,980
" 15 ...	212,180	295,950	155,480
" 22 ...	184,906	261,290	171,190
" 29 ...	237,870	236,300	161,300
Aug. 5 ...	265,980	306,930	158,750
" 12 ...	246,640	292,380	125,910
" 19 ...	221,910	283,130	82,420
" 26 ...	206,620	247,050	62,980
Sept. 2 ...	250,890	239,300	58,150
" 9 ...	346,990	207,210	92,330
" 16 ...	393,980	171,680	90,630

Thus the stock is now more than double what it was in September, 1863, and more than four times what it was in September, 1862. This gratifying result, it must be remembered, has taken place in the presence of a largely increased consumption.

A VERY pleasant article by Herr Franke tells us that Meyerbeer was opposed to the organ in worship; preferring, as he said, the drum and flute as an accompaniment to the human voice, than which he considered nothing more striking in sound.

POISONING BY TOBACCO.—A very curious case of poisoning by the absorption of tobacco through the skin was mentioned, at a recent meeting of the Académie des Sciences, by M. Cl. Bernard, who received the information from a M. Namias. A smuggler had placed a quantity of unmanufactured tobacco next his skin, and the heat and perspiration produced by walking caused the poisonous properties of the tobacco to enter the system, the consequences of which were very serious.

BUTTER.—At present, in many parts of England, much inconvenience is experienced from the scarcity of fresh butter. The profits on this article have of late years been greatly diminished, and substitutes have been much spoken of. It is worthy of remark that the districts most famous for butter supply the meanest quality of cheese. We hear much of Leicester cheese, but we are not aware that the county excels others in its butter supply. A vegetable butter, superior in richness to that produced from cow's milk, is obtained from the sheatree, in Africa; and at home here the consumption of marmalade is greatly on the increase as a substitute. The average price of English butter, taking a series of years in this country, is 1s. per pound; the present price, in most of our provincial markets, is 1s. 6d. per pound; but it has reached 2s. at Stamford. It appears from our last week's market news, that at Carnarthen, notwithstanding the short supply, butter sold at 1s. 0½d. The scarcity has been felt in Ireland, but supplies are now increasing.

THE BRITISH FORCE IN INDIA.—We mentioned in a recent issue, that Sir John Lawrence has determined to repeal the income tax. We hear that his Excellency meditates large army reductions. He is of opinion, and justly, too, that India does not require a large standing army of 80,000 Europeans. No one knows better than Sir John Lawrence what number of troops is necessary to preserve the peace of the Queen's Indian empire. The Commander-in-Chief and Sir Robert Napier have, we understand, vigorously opposed the proposal for military retrenchments. They point to Nepal, Hyderabad, the Rajpootana States, and Afghanistan, as the sources of future danger to India. But Sir John, we learn, in three able minutes, has harried into pieces the specious arguments of the military members. He has demonstrated that their fears are quite chimerical, and that the arrangements proposed by him, under the guidance of a military chief who keeps his eyes open, and knows his duty, will render India perfectly safe. Sir Charles Trevelyan and other members of the Council have zealously supported the Governor-General. All the minutes and papers on the subject have been transmitted to the Secretary of State, who, we have no doubt, will fully appreciate the force of Sir John's reasoning.—*Hindoo Patriot* of August 22.

An interesting full-length lithographic portrait of the Emperor of the French, size of life, is now to be seen in Paris. The colossal stone on which the drawing is made was extracted expressly from the quarries of Vigne, in the Gard, while the press used in taking the impressions is more than 18 ft. long. The sheets of paper employed are 8½ ft. long; and so much time and care are required in striking off each impression that not more than one in twenty of the proofs are good. Those which happen to be successful are, however, remarkable for their vigour and clearness of outline. A copy is exhibited at a print-seller's in the Rue Richelieu.

FACETIE.

WHY cannot two bishops row in the same boat? Because they are in different seas.

The latest notion of Young England is to have its shirt-collars made of vulcanised india-rubber! What next?

"Ma, why is a postage-stamp like a bad scholar?" "I can't tell, my son; why is it?" "Because it gets licked and put in the corner."

Soon after Sir Henry Rivers took orders, he was told by a friend that he would undoubtedly become a bishop. "Indeed!" said Sir Henry: "why so?" "Because rivers invariably go to the sea."

A PARISHAN advertises photographs giving to the physiognomy the effects of the full moon shining on the face. He says the softness that the moon produces is remarkable. There is no doubt of it.

"HALLO, Frank, I thought you were dead?" "Oh," said Frank, "they did get a story round that I was dead, but it was another man. I knew it wasn't me as soon as I heard of it!"

A MAN being asked what he had for dinner, replied, "A lean wife and the ruin of man for sauce." On being asked for an explanation, it appeared that his dinner consisted of a spare rib of pork and apple sauce.

A WAG, the other day, asked a friend, "how many knaves do you suppose live in this street besides yourself?" "Besides myself?" replied the other; "do you mean to insult me?" "Well then," said the first, "how many do you reckon, including yourself?"

A JURYMAN, kept several days at his own expense, sent a friend to the judge to complain that he had been paid nothing for his attendance. "Oh, tell him," said the witty judge, "that if ever he should have to go before a jury himself, he will get one for nothing."

A YOUNG lady, visiting in a genteel family, asked the footman for a potato at dinner. John made no response. The request was repeated; when John, putting his mouth to her ear, said, very audibly, "There's just twa in the dish, and they must be kept for the strangers."

At a tea party, where some Cantabs happened to be present, after the dish had been handed round, the lady who presided over the tea equipage, "hoped the tea was good." "Very good, indeed, madam," was the general reply, till it came to the turn of one of the Cantabs to speak, who, between truth and politeness, shrewdly observed: "That the tea was excellent, but the water was smoky."

It is said that Alexandre Dumas' autographs sold at immense prices at a Pittsburgh fancy fair, as much as 60,000 francs having been realized for 100 of them. We have heard of Alexandre getting extravagant prices for his M.S. at so much per line, and even per letter, but this pay exceeds all that he has as yet received. About forty-four francs each letter of his name is a price that any man my sign at all day long.

BEGGING-LETTER WRITERS.—The *Messenger du Midi* states that Baron Rothschild possesses the most voluminous collection of begging letters that any financier ever received. They form a complete series. Among the number is one lately addressed to the baron, containing the very tempting proposition that for the bagatelle of 50,000fr. the writer would engage to show how he could prolong his life to the age of 150 years. The following is the baron's reply:—"Sir,—It has frequently happened to me to be threatened with death if I did not give a sum of money. You are certainly the first that has ever asked me for it in proposing to prolong my life. Your proposition is, without doubt, far better and more humane. But my religion teaches me that we are all under the hand of God, and I will not do anything to withdraw myself from His decrees. My refusal, moreover, does not in any way attack your discovery, from which you will not fail, I hope, to profit yourself. Regretting that I cannot accede to your proposal, I sincerely congratulate you on the

150 years which you are called on to live in this world.—Accept, &c. J. DE ROTHSCHILD."

A LITTLE BIT OF YORKSHIRE.—(Horse critic and Yorkshire horsebreaker to steward of great man meet on the road).—Horse Critic: Well, William, that's a nice-looking colt; whose is it?—Horse Breaker: Well, sir, that depends upon circumstances.—Critic: How so?—Breaker: If it turns out well it belongs to Mr. B. (the steward); but you know, sir, (with a sly look), if it turns out bad, it belongs to my lord.

THE King of the Belgians is reported to have said, on taking leave of Nadar, "Fling out your ballast in Belgium, as I have sworn to keep my country undiminished." "It hits both ways," says a French critic, "as it would imply that little Belgium could hardly afford to lose so large a slice of country as might be taken up in a balloon; and his Majesty must try again for a sarcasm at the expense of a Frenchman." It is curious how willing the latter are to make a joke; how unwilling to take one.

A BULL is good eating in any land. Here is a fine one produced by the *Independence*, in a burst of fine writing: "A hundred thousand hearts were beating as they witnessed the ascent of Nadar; a hundred thousand eyes were watching the movements of the balloon"—thus showing that each possessor of a heart was either shutting one eye or had but one eye—a singular Belgian race.

A POSER.

"John," inquired a dominie of a hopeful pupil, "what is a nailer?"

"A man who makes nails," replied hopeful, quite readily.

"Very good. Now what is a tailor?"

"One who makes tails," was the equally quick reply.

"O, you blockhead," said the dominie, biting his lips; "a man who makes tails! did you ever!"

"To be sure," quoth hopeful—"if the tailor didn't put tails to the coats he made, they would be all jackets!"

"Eh?—ah!—well!—to be sure. I didn't think of that. Beats Watts' logic! Go to the top of the class, John."

CONCILIATING AN AUDIENCE.—I remember a story of a certain comedian, by the name of Walsh, at the Theatre Royal, Dublin. This gentleman never rose higher in his profession than to enact those useful but humble individuals in livery who announce the arrival of visitors to the principal personages in the drama. One evening, a great tragedian being on the stage, it was Mr. Walsh's duty to come on, attired in plush, and say, "My lord, the coach is at the door." This, being all that was laid down for him, he said; but, directly afterwards, advancing to the footlights, and addressing the gallery, he continued, with much animation, "And allow me to add that the man who lifts his hand against a woman, save in the way of kindness, is unworthy the name of a Briton." This sentiment brought down a tornado of applause; but, on retiring from the stage, the actor was pounced upon by the great tragedian, and asked how he dared to overstep the limits assigned to him. "I am very sorry," quoth Mr. Walsh, "but it's my benefit next Monday, and I've got to conciliate the audience as well as you, Mr. Macready."

THE WALNUT—A GERMAN STORY.

Under a great tree, close to the village, two boys found a walnut.

"It belongs to me," said Ignatius, "for I was the first to see it."

"No; it belongs to me," cried Bernard; "for I was the first to pick it up," and so they began to quarrel in earnest.

"I will settle the dispute," said an older boy, who just then came up. He placed himself between the two boys, broke the nut in two, and said:

"The one piece of shell belongs to him who first saw the nut; the other piece of shell belongs to him who first picked it up; but the kernel I keep for judging the case."

"And this," he said, as he sat down and laughed, "is the common end of most lawsuits."

"Law business in the courts, know well,
The kernel eats, and leaves the shell!"

SINGULAR SCENE IN AN EEL SHOP.

At Clerkenwell Police Court, the other day, Michael Maxwell, aged 35, a labourer, was charged with violently assaulting Joseph Bunyan, a stone modeller.

The complainant, who had on his face two or three patches of surgical plaster, said—Last night about twenty minutes past ten I was in bed, when I was called up, and informed that my wife was drunk and in an eel shop. I went there, and found the prisoner and my wife sitting together. The prisoner had his arm round my wife's waist. They had two cups before them, and they were feeding each other with

spoons from the cups, and, what was more scandalous, between each spoonful they had a kiss. (Loud laughter.) I said to my wife, "My dear, you should be at home," and then she again kissed the prisoner. (A laugh.) I took hold of my wife, who is the mother of seven children, and nearly ready to go to bed with the eighth, and told her I should not allow her to have any more of that fellow's kissing, when the prisoner jumped up and struck me a blow on the nose, which made it bleed, and cut my lip. Both the prisoner and my wife were drunk. I might have spoken crossly to my wife in the eel shop, but who could help it when you saw a man with his arm round your wife's waist, kissing her and feeding her with hot eels?

William Halfhead said: This gentleman here (the prisoner) went with the other gentleman's wife. This gentleman here (the complainant) saw that gentleman there (the prisoner) putting hot eels into his wife's mouth and kissing her. (Loud laughter.) This gentleman here (the prisoner) had his arms round the other gentleman's wife, and they were as happy as turtle-doves. (A laugh.) The prisoner got up and hit this gentleman on the face and nose. After that, they all left the hot eel shop, and when they had got some distance, this gentleman (the prisoner) hit him again, knocked him down, and kicked him twice in the face.

The prisoner, when asked for his defence, said: I have nothing to say nor any witnesses to call.

The magistrate fined the prisoner £3, or, in default, two months' imprisonment, with hard labour.

DESCENDING GRATITUDE.

At Nice a man was saved from death by aplery by the energy and promptitude of his neighbour, a working man.

"I'll give Blaize ten Napoleons when I see him," remarked the gentleman *rediculous* to a friend.

One week later the friend inquired if he had seen Blaize.

"No," was the reply; "but he'll lose nothing by that; I have five Napoleons here for him."

A week later the same question was asked.

"No; but I am going to give him a pig."

Another passed, and the same question was answered—

"No, Blaize has not the pig; we have killed and salted it, and I had a good mind to send you a ham. But I won't forget Blaize."

"Do you draw at all?" asked a sprightly young lady of a sentimental youth, who was suffering from a slight cold, and in consequence confined to the parlour. "No not exactly," he bawled out, "but I have a blister that does."

MESSRS. Cobden and Bright are giants in their own land, yet is a man a trifle in his own land in comparison to what he is in the far off. In California Messrs. Cobden and Bright are now 300 feet long by 20 feet in diameter, and 60 feet in circumference. In England we would not accord to either six feet in height nor the same in rotundity. The fact is, that two enormous trees in Big Tree Grove, San Francisco, have been named: after the two M.P.s, and two marble tablets, fastened by copper rivets to the trees, now tell the world of the fame of the British politicians.

A VERY good joke is told of a gentleman who had risen in life, but whose education had been rather neglected. However, he was jolly, and loved a bit of fun as well as most people. Dining with a friend one evening, the servant, in bringing in a tongue, clumsily let it fall, upon which the good-humoured host, instead of storming at the man, turned to his guests and said quaintly, "That was *lappus lingus*,"—a speech which caused such laughter and merriment that the gentleman bore it in memory and resolved to reproduce it at his own table. Whereupon he invited a party, and took care to give orders to John to let down the round of beef as he was entering the room—an order punctually obeyed. "That was a *lappus lingus*," said the host, but no laughter was evoked. "I say that was a *lappus lingus*," he repeated, but still without effect. At length, sadly put out by the non-success of his witicism, he repeated the original story with capital effect—of laughter.

THE KING AND THE KISS.—At the first drawing-room held by Queen Adelaide and William the Fourth after their coronation, Miss E. Ussher was presented, as a matter of course, though already well-known to the King while he was Duke of Clarence, owing to his friendship of many years standing with her father. At the moment of presentation, however, some hesitation occurred, owing to a slight informality as Lord James O'Brien was handing her forward. At this the King, in his hearty stentorian voice, called out, "Is that Bessy Ussher? God bless her! let her come! Why, I've known her ever since she was a baby!" And a hearty and resounding kiss, planted on either cheek of the blushing girl, gave ample testimony to the sincerity of his declaration, and the vigour of his regard. The confusion of the beautiful

"Becky" may be imagined. Every eye in the courtly circle was instantly turned full upon her; and great was the admiration and the astonishment of the high dignitaries collected around the throne on this grand and stately occasion.—*Princes, Public Men, and Pretty Women; Episodes in Real Life.*

SINGULAR MARRIAGE IN OLDEN TIMES.

The Rev. Stephen Mix made a journey to Northampton, in 1699, in search of a wife. He arrived at the Rev. Solomon Stoddard's, informed him of the object of his visit, and that the pressure of home duties required the utmost despatch. Mr. Stoddard took him into the room where his daughters were, and introduced him to Mary, Esther, Christina, Sarah, Bebekah, and Hannah, and then retired. Mr. Mix addressed Mary, the eldest daughter; said he had lately been settled at Weathersfield, and was desirous of obtaining a wife, and concluded by offering her his heart and hand. She blushing replied that so important a proposition required time for consideration. He rejoined that he was pleased that she asked for suitable time for reflection, and that, in order to afford her the needed opportunity to think of his proposal, he would step into the next room and smoke a pipe with her father, and she could report to him. Having smoked his pipe and sent a message to Miss Mary that he was ready for her answer, she came in and asked for further time for consideration. He replied that she could reflect still longer on the subject, and send her answer by letter to Weathersfield. In a few weeks he received her reply, which is, probably, the most laconic epistle ever penned. Here is the model letter, which was soon followed by a wedding:—

"NORTHAMPTON, 1696.

"Rev. Stephen Mix:—Yes,

"MARY STODDARD."

The matrimonial Mix-ture took place on the 1st of December, 1696, and proved to be compounded of most congenial elements.

A WALKING PARADOX.—Mr. Banting has achieved greatness by growing less.—*Punch.*

ORNITHOLOGY.—The bird that possesses the most brilliant plumage of all the feathered tribe is, we believe, the duck o' di'monds.—*Punch.*

A THOUGHT FROM OUR TUB.—Respect everybody's feelings. If you wish to have your laundress's address, avoid asking her where she "hangs out."—*Punch.*

DREADFUL TO CONTEMPLATE.
(From an Old Lady Correspondent.)

The Home Secretary is going to demand from the different governors of the gaols in England a return of all the prisoners placed under their care within the last two years. Gracious! London will be deluged with criminals! We shall all be garroted!—*Punch.*

MUSICAL.—A celebrated composer wrote to a friend requesting the pleasure of his company to luncheon; key of G. His friend, a thorough musician interpreted the invitation rightly, and came to the composer's house for luncheon at One, sharp.—*Punch.*

ADVANCE IN ASTRONOMY.—Among the papers read at the British Association, there was one on "The Invisible Part of the Moon's Surface." For all that appears to the contrary, that side of our Satellite, at least, may be made of green cheese.—*Punch.*

"ONE TOUCH OF NATURE," &c.

Mr. Sprigles: "Half-a-crown? How do you make that out? Why, it's under four miles; you don't reckon anything for t-is baby, I should hope?"

Cobby (father of a faulty himself): "Ah, I dessay you and your good lady don't reckon nothink of 'im, neither, bless 'is little heart, eh, Mum?" (in a beaming manner to Mrs. S.) [Claim allowed.—*Punch.*

THE DISEASE OF STEALING.—At one of the late meetings of the Social Science Congress a paper was read on penal discipline, with reference to which:—"Lord Teignmouth suggested oakum-picking, and supported his view by the opinion of Bishop Berkeley, that tar-water was a cure for all diseases." In the opinion of Lord Teignmouth, then, theft is merely the manifestation of a disease. Very well; but if oakum-picking is a cure for that disease affecting pickpockets, members of the swell mob, and common thieves of both sexes in general known to the police, would it not be likely to be equally efficacious in the case of a fashionable lady affected with the same disease under the name of kleptomania?—*Punch.*

BREWERS OF MISCHIEF.—In the report of Mr. Phillips, the principal of the Laboratory of the Inland Revenue Department, we find it mentioned that licensed brewers are in the habit of using poisonous substances, such as *coccus indicus*, to adulterate their beer—and that they use it in dangerous quantities. Mr. Phillips, in a mild way, suggests that it might be desirable to make public the names of those persons who are found guilty of poisoning their beer. We

should say it is not only desirable, but necessary. Those who vitiate the great liquid nourisher of England at its fountain head deserve most stringent measures. In Constantinople the fraudulent baker is nailed to his own doorstep by the ear. We might do something of the sort with the murderous brewer. It would be only fair to head him up in one of his own hogheads, and feed him on his own beer through the bung-hole.—*Fun.*

SOCIAL SCIENCE SILLINESS.—The philosophers at Bath, who really deserve to have their heads shaved, have been, as usual with him, tempering inferior science with weak sensation. They have been discussing the relative temperatures of man and woman; and the president of the section did not think it beneath the dignity of a grave scientific assemblage to twaddle about "ladies being more warm-hearted than men." Really, after that, he should chalk his face, paint a red crescent on either cheek, and open the proceedings with, "Here we are again!"—*Fun.*

THE BLISS OF PAIN.

That health's not highest happiness I'll show
Though thus philosophers themselves deliver.
Health is the level flowing of Life's river,
The medium 'twixt th' extremes of bliss and woe.
The sweet is sweetest that comes after bitter,
The bitter bitterest that comes after sweets;
The night is darkest just before it meets
The King of Day upon his golden litter;
The calm is calmest that comes after storm;
The quietude most quiet after pain,
The rant and racking of the fevered brain;
And strongest faith attends on great alarm;
The stream that breaks on no opposing rock
Ne'er knows the thrill of an electric shock.

W. J.

GEMS.

It has been beautifully said that "the veil which covers the face of Futurity is woven by the hand of Mercy."

THE LOVE OF MONEY.—The love of money is a veritiginous pool, sucking all into it to destroy it. It is troubled and uneven, giddy and unsafe, serving no end but its own, and that also in a restless, uneasy motion.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD.

THERE goes a virtuous and honest man. Who cares? Nobody looks at him, or cares a fig how he dresses or what he says.

Here passes a man of wealth. The old ladies and the children run to the window. "Where?" "Who?" "How does he dress?" He is a great object of attraction. "How in the world did he make so much?" "He doesn't look as if he was worth a penny."

This is the way of the world. Everybody gazes with admiration upon the rich, while they turn away from virtuous poverty.

Let a man make ten thousand pounds, and he is a gentleman, every inch of him. Everybody has a kind word and smile for him.

Be poor and honest, and no one knows you. Men and women have heard of such a name as yours, and you may live at their elbow, but they are not certain about it.

Possess a fortune and live at the mile post, and your neighbours and friends would line the heart of the city. All would know where you lived, and point a stranger to the very door.

We repeat—such is the world. Golden vice is caressed, while humble virtue is not observed.

Will the time never come—never?—when men shall be honoured for their virtues and despised for their vices; rather than be caressed for their riches and condemned for their poverty? Everybody, in words, censures the idea of honouring the rich because they are rich; and yet, such are the regulations of society, that almost everybody does humble himself in his manners and feelings, when in the presence of "the upper ten thousand." As long as ladies will associate with the voluptuous rich, and shun the virtuous poor, so long will vice be considered no disgrace, and wealth will pay for the sacrifice of virtue.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GROUND GLASS.—A ready way of imitating ground glass is to dissolve Epsom salts in beer, and apply with a brush; as it dries, it crystallizes.

RUSSIAN LIVING.—There is a capital summer drink in Russia called "kislijsce," a light, frothy, sparkling kind of beer, which does not get into the head. It is exquisitely grateful to the palate when iced, and may be made at home for about one halfpenny a quart. An excellent cold soup for summer use, a delicacy

almost unknown in England, may be made from the liquor in which fish has been boiled, with chopped onions and grated horse-radish, a little lemon-peel, mint, thyme, and fried parsley. A slice of cold salmon and a little cucumber will improve it vastly. It is the famous Russian "batvinia," only abused by those who have never eaten it at good tables.

SUBSTITUTES FOR YEAST.—The dried yeast which is sold in London under the name of German yeast, is the solid matter of the yeast, the liquid having been allowed to drain away. It will keep many days in a cool place, if placed in a small quantity of water, when it sinks like a soft mud to the bottom. It is very largely used by the London bakers for making the better kinds of fancy bread. What is termed patent yeast may be made from common yeast at first, and a successional supply may be kept up. Ure's dictionary gives the following directions:—Boil six ounces of hops in three gallons of water three hours; strain it off, and let it stand ten minutes; then add half-a-peck of ground malt, stir it well up, and cover it over; return the hops, and put the same quantity of water to them again, boiling them the same time as before, straining it off to the first mash; stir it up, and let it remain four hours, then strain it off, and set it to work at 90 deg. with three pints of patent yeast; let it stand about twenty hours; take the scum off the top, and strain it through a hair-sieve; it will be then fit for use: one pint is sufficient to make a bushel of bread.—Or the unfermented bread made with muriatic acid and bicarbonate of soda may be employed; but it requires care in making, and, to our taste, does not yield a bread as pleasant as that made with yeast.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is now beyond a doubt that Lord Wodehouse is appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

THE meeting of the British Association at Bath has realized a profit of £2,222 17s.

A SUM of two millions is to be raised immediately for the Pope. Subscriptions are being raised in England and Ireland.

EIGHTY-ONE magnificent painted windows have been placed in Glasgow Cathedral within the last eight years.

GARIBALDI says that some bills of exchange, bearing his forged signature, are in circulation in England. "Bill-brokers beware!"

A SON of Rachel has just passed his examination for the Imperial navy. He promises to distinguish himself by his talent and application; his cast of features is decidedly not Jewish, and strongly resembles that of the first Emperor.

LORD PALMERSTON is supposed to have been borne in Ireland. His lordship's own return to the census officer is as follows:—Henry John Temple, head of the house, born at Broadlands, in the parish of Romsey Extra, Oct. 20, 1784.

THE last link that binds England and France together was forged on the 1st of October, on which day the Commercial Treaty between the two countries came into force, and each may seek to make as much out of the other as it can.

It is said that there is no secret made in Berlin that the King intends to have the Duchies for himself, and he who would advance a contrary idea is smiled down as very infantine indeed in his knowledge.

THE French Government is in constant receipt of immense sums from the Mexican Government by each mail. It must be interesting to the Mexicans to read of the immense sums which the new order of things costs Mexico; but doubtless it is well worth paying for—doubtless.

SIR JOHN LAWRENCE is expected to repeal the Income Tax and to reduce the European army in India. As regards the former proceeding, the Chancellor of the Exchequer might take a hint, if he would not see the mother country worse off than one of her dependencies.

THE Earl of Clancarty, at the dinner of the Ballinasloe Society the other day, in proposing "The Health of the Prince and Princess of Wales," stated that he would wish to see the Prince occupying the viceregal position in Dublin, where they would have an opportunity of knowing and valuing their future sovereign. "The Princess was one who would be an ornament to the throne, and who, if she were in Dublin, would be looked upon as the loveliest of the lovely." The merits of the late Lord-Lieutenant were not forgotten, and his health, proposed in eulogistic terms by Major Darcey, was cordially received. He also expressed a wish that the Prince of Wales would go there, and that her Majesty should occasionally hold her Court in Dublin. It would make them feel less like a colony of Great Britain under a governor—it would make them feel a part and parcel of the empire.

CONTENTS.

THE WARNING VOICE ...	769	THE BALL AND THE BRIE ...	788
THE DIAMOND-SKEWER ...	773	THE BALL ...	788
THE MOTHER'S BLESSING ...	776	ALL ALONE ...	791
SOME FACTS ABOUT DIAMONDS ...	776	THE AUCHDUN ...	794
HALLOWE'EN ...	777	SCIENCE ...	796
CENTENARIES AND COMMEMORATIONS ...	779	WHO'S WHO? ...	797
THE STEAMSHIP ...	780	STATISTICS ...	798
THE STRANGE SAILOR ...	781	THE BILLS OF FAIR ...	799
SIBYL LEE ...	782	GENE ...	799
THE BOSPAGE OF BRANDON ...	785	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ...	799
		MISCELLANEOUS ...	799

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- O. D. M.—It is not within our province to advise you.
- E. PICKERING.—We will endeavour to gratify you and your friends.
- F. G. E.—Your hint shall not be overlooked. We know of no such periodical as you inquire for.
- N. C. M.—The best chronological authority gives November 1, 1755, as the day of the earthquake at Lisbon.
- KELN.—You will find all the particulars which you require in Bayley's "History and Antiquities of the Tower of London."
- H. W.—A full account of the mode of manufacturing aerated water, in large or small quantity, will be found in any good Encyclopædia, under that heading.
- C. R. BRIGHON.—Your request is couched in such indefinite language that it is impossible for us to comply with your request, or assist you in any way.
- F. S.—You can appeal against the assessment rate to the next general quarter sessions held after the publication of the rate.
- S. M. C.—The reason why Castle Hedingham in Essex is pronounced (by the natives) Heningham is, that that was the old way of spelling the name.
- CLARISSA.—You cannot do better than consult the little work on bees which has just appeared. The handwriting is very nice.
- C. O. B.—Copper in liquids may be detected by spirits of hartshorn, which turns them blue. Of course, we could not undertake to make any analysis whatever.
- L. A. P.—The leech used for medical purposes is called the *hirundo medicinalis*, to distinguish it from other varieties, such as the horse leech and Lisbon leech.
- M. W.—Certainly, lead and pewter weights are unlawful, and all lawful weights must be stamped. You should lay the matter before the inspector.
- P. F.—The author of the line, "A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind," is David Garrick. (See his poetical works; "Occasional Prologue.")
- T. H. R.—The first son of a Prince of Wales is Prince of Wales, whether born before or after his father's accession to the throne.
- G. P.—The tree which Charles I. pointed out on his way to the scaffold as having been planted by his brother, Prince Henry, no longer exists. It stood near the old Spring Gardens, on ground which has since been built upon.
- D. T. C.—We cannot decide whether Welsh is a finer language than the Greek. We have no knowledge of the former; but from our acquaintance with the latter, are much inclined to doubt your assertion.
- A. Z.—The means used to summon servants before the introduction of bells was a whistle, which was generally of silver. You will find the custom alluded to in Scott's novel, "Red Gauntlet." Handwriting very ladylike.
- E. D.—To whiten the nails, take of dilute sulphuric acid, two drachms; tincture of myrrh, one drachm; spring water, four ounces; mix thoroughly, and after well cleansing the fingers, dip into the wash.
- F. B. requests us to announce that he is anxiously seeking for a wife. He is of medium height, handsome, accomplished, having at present an income of £700 a year, but when of age will have a fortune of £6,000 and fine estate.
- T. P. D.—Probably the following lotion for promoting the growth of the hair you will find efficacious:—Eau-de-Cologne, two ounces; tincture of carduus, two drachms; oil of rosemary and oil of lavender, of each ten drops.
- M. M.—The limits of age for clerks on their first appointment in the Patent Office is 18 to 20. The standard of qualification merely comprises handwriting and orthography, elementary arithmetic, and English composition.
- JAN. W. L.—We thank you for your very kind communication. We have not spared time, talent, or money to place THE LONDON READER at the head of the periodical press, and we will not relax in our efforts.
- LITTLE LOU.—The name Phoebe is Greek, in which language it signifies the light of life; Phyllis is also Greek, and means a green bud; Priscilla is Latin, and means somewhat old.
- J. O. T.—The facts may all be exactly as you state, but it is wholly impossible for us to define the extent of your rights. We are surprised that you have not placed the matter in the hands of a solicitor.
- T. A. G.—"Self-Made" commenced in No. 31 of THE 7 DAYS' JOURNAL, of which a copy can be obtained from the publisher of THE LONDON READER. The handwriting is tolerably good, and would do well enough for warehouse purposes.
- W. W. S.—If a bond be given, and at the same time a mortgage is also made for securing the debt, the bond surety, if he pay the bond, has the right to stand in the place of the mortgagee; it is immaterial that the surety is not aware of the existing mortgage.
- JEANETTE.—Choose five firm cabbages for pickling (the largest are not the best), and take off the outer leaves, quarter the cabbage, take out the stalk, slice the quarters into a colander, and sprinkle a little salt between the layers (too much will spoil the colour); let remain in colander till next day, when shake well, to throw off all the brine; put into jars, cover with hot pickle, composed of black pepper and

allspice, of each one ounce; ginger pounded, horse-radish sliced, and salt, of each half an ounce to every quart of vinegar; two capsicums, or one drachm of cayenne, may be added to the quart. In all pickles, the vinegar should always be two inches or more above the vegetables, as it is sure to shrink; and if the vegetables are not completely covered in pickle, they will not keep.

ROSA LEE.—As you cannot specify your father's occupation, you may simply state "unknown" in the register, adding any other explanatory words which you may think proper. The husband must certainly sign both his Christian names. Why should one of them be suppressed?

PATIENCE.—The symptoms are those of consumption, and this is a disease which may be complicated with various morbid conditions of the lungs and heart, which requires appropriate medical treatment. You should apply to the Consumptive Hospital, Brompton.

P. R. F.—You were quite right; sight does not afford any immediate perception either of the volume or shape of an object. The information which we derive from the sense, of the size or shape of distant objects, is obtained by the comparison of different impressions, made upon the sense of sight at different times.

R. L. E.—The lines entitled "The Death of Summer" contain many pretty poetical images; and if our correspondent had only taken a little more care in clothing them with poetical language, we would gladly have found a place for them; but, as they stand, we must beg permission to decline them.

BENEATH THE WAVES.

Where the sea is smiling so peacefully,
There stood a city in days gone by;
But the green earth open'd to make a grave,
And the city slumbers beneath the wave.

Where life and beauty dwelt long ago,
The cooing doves and seavells grow;
The men that dwell there in days of yore,
Now heat not, see not—they are no more.

But go at glancing to the ocean's side,
And harken, harken, to the rippling tide:
And a faint, sweet music will float to thee,
Like church-bells chiming across the sea.

It is the olden, the sunken town,
Which faintly chimeth fast fathoms down;
As the sea-breeze wanders so softly by,
The sweet notes tremble, and moan, and die.

Where now is moorland bespeckled with gold,
Where the deep fens thicken and gather cold,
Of old there blossomed divinely free,
A flowery kingdom of poetry.

A wondrous kingdom of mild delight,
Nearth a heaven spotted with dream-clouds white,
A land of roses, with larks above,
Of bowers made balmy by the breath of love.

Each gift of beauty the earth can bring,
Each tone, each colour, each precious thing,
Each lovely impulse each joy impart,
Seem'd made eternal by the might of art.

But now!—the moorland bespeckled with gold,
The fens that thicken and gather cold!
The wondrous kingdom of days of yore,
Now hears not, sees not, and is no more.

But hast thou wholly, in sin and strife,
Forgot for ever thy childhood's life?
Have pain and darkness and want obscure,
Destroyed all yearnings to what is pure?

Hark, when above thee a summer night
Gleams starry, still, with quiet light;
And a faint, sweet music will float to thee,
Like church-bells chiming across the sea.

It is the life that once has been,
Which sweetly chimeth, still unseen;
As the sea-breeze wanders so softly by,
The sweet notes tremble, and moan, and die.

F. L. H.

LACRA, a lady, thirty-seven years of age, living acclimated, respectably connected, rather good-looking, possessing an amiable and affectionate disposition, would be happy to correspond matrimonially with a gentleman between forty and fifty, in whom she could confide.

J. W.—The aspiration in the lines entitled "I would be a Boy again," has our entire sympathy; and if it were only expressed in somewhat more poetical language, we would be glad to avail ourselves of the verse. As it is, however, the poem does not attain our standard for original composition, and is therefore declined, with thanks.

D. C.—You can yourself perform the operation of dry cupping. The *modus operandi* is to place a piece of paper, saturated with spirits of wine and ignited, in an inverted wine-glass, and apply it over the part, such as the neck, temples, &c. It draws the flesh into the glass, and causes a termination of blood in the part; which affords great relief in headache, and other local pains.

R. A. J.—Any number of persons may establish a friendly society for the purpose of raising a fund for payment of a sum of money at the death of any of its members, or otherwise. A set of rules must first, however, be drawn up, and sent in duplicate to the Registrar of Friendly Societies, to certify that they are in conformity with the law (18 and 19 Vict. c. 63).

J. P. O.—The custom of ladies taking the arms of gentlemen either to be led down to dinner or in a ballroom, is, we think, of comparatively modern introduction. We remember a lady who died some thirty years ago saying that when she first saw a lady "hook" herself to the arm of a gentleman in a ballroom, instead of being led out by the hand, she felt so indignant that she remarked to a friend, "If my daughter did that, I should take her home immediately!"

D. F. 75th.—We believe the drum, so-called probably from assimilation to its sound, was an Oriental invention, introduced into Europe by the Crusaders, or perhaps by the Moors in Spain. Trumpets and drums are mentioned in Froissart's account of Edward III.'s entry into Calais, in 1347. The Swiss are said to have introduced the fife as an accompaniment to the drum, and there is an allusion to its use in the army of Henry VIII. when proceeding to the siege of Boulogne. The use of fifes was discontinued in the French

army early in the eighteenth century; they were also for some time abolished in the English army, but were restored by the Duke of Cumberland about the same period; and the "drums and fifes" constitute at present the only regimental music of the British army.

J. J.—The difference is this: In non-condensing or high-pressure engines, the exhaustion pipes of the cylinder open into the atmosphere; whereas, in the condensing or low-pressure engines, the pipes lead to an apparatus in which the steam is condensed, the term given to the process of converting it into water by the agency of cold. Hand-writing good.

M. S.—The practice of men kissing each other when meeting in the street, which is annoying you so much to witness in your continental trip, is not exclusively a continental or foreign trait. It was customary enough in England formerly, as you will find on reference to Evelyn's "Diary and Correspondence." The publisher will attend to your order on receipt of postage-stamps for numbers required.

W. T.—Contemporary is the correct word; contemporary is a downright barbarism. In the Latin language, whence the word is derived, it is never used for *con*, except before a vowel, as *contemneret*, *contemneret*, *contemneret*, &c. It is just as absurd to use the word *contemporary* instead of *contemporaneous* as it would be to use *exgratulate* instead of *congratulate*.

T. S. T.—The existence of such a document as a warrant from the Crown or the Secretary of State for the execution of a criminal is a popular error. No such authority is required by the law, or is ever given. After the verdict of guilty by the jury, the judge passes the sentence of death, but without fixing the time or place of execution, which devolves upon the sheriff to appoint, so it is within the time prescribed by law.

A. A. C.—The Civil Service Commissioners limit the examination of candidates for the office of curators, attendants, and others in the National Gallery to simple reading and writing, being a very much lower test than that adopted for most of the departments of the public service. The maximum pension is two-thirds of the salary enjoyed, and it will be obtainable after forty years' service; but a person appointed at the age of forty-five can hardly, in the course of nature, be expected to profit by it.

L. S. J.—You can make essence of mushroom by sprinkling a little salt on either flap or button mushrooms. Three hours after doing this, wash them; next day strain off the liquor that will have flowed from them, put it into a stewpan, and boil it till it is reduced to half. It will not keep long, but is preferable to any of the catnap sold in shops, as to preserve them they must have spice, &c., which overpowers the delicate flavour of the mushrooms. An artificial mushroom-bed will supply this delicious relish all the year round.

T. H.—The term "day" has two distinct significations. As opposed to night, it means the interval during which we receive light from the sun, an interval which is not very definite; as, according to some, it means the period between sunrise and sunset; whilst according to others it means the period between the morning dawn and the termination of the evening twilight. The other sense of the word "day" is that in which it is used as a chronometric term, to signify the period which elapses between two successive appearances of the sun at the same point of the heavens. This interval—if it be the one to which your question relates—certainly includes a day and a night.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.—"Percy Lee," in reply to "Jenny M.," thinks she is just the young lady he is looking for, and would like to correspond with matrimonially. He is 5 ft 7 in. in height, has black whiskers and moustache, and black eyes, and is considered by his friends to be very good-looking; age twenty. Exchange of *cartes de visite* desired—"Harry Gray" would be glad to correspond with "Rosebud," with a view to matrimony, being tired of single blessedness. He is twenty years of age, rather tall, has black eyes and black moustache, and is considered good-looking. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged—"Annie R.," a good-looking brunette, with handsome black eyes and fair complexion, and of a merry disposition, thinks "Frank A." just the one she could love, if he will promise to make a good and steady husband. He must also be very affectionate—"Frank A." is just the person "Grace" would like to correspond with, as a preliminary to matrimony. She is tall, dark, and has large, handsome eyes; and if "Frank A." will give love for love, she thinks they might be very happy—"W. B." desires to correspond matrimonially with "Rosebud" (No. 44) or "Frank A." (same number), or, in fact, with any other of our lady readers, not over twenty-two years of age. He is twenty-four, 5 ft 6 in. in height, not good-looking, but pleasing, and has an income of £150 a year. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged—"Louie" would like to correspond matrimonially with "Frank A." and requests his *carte de visite* as a preliminary. He is tall, has dark hair and eyes, with a fair complexion, rather fine eyes, and is generally considered by her friends as being rather pretty and ladylike. As we prophesied, "Frank A.," though little and fair, is all the more lovable in "Louie's" eyes—"Don Pedro" is a candidate for the hand and heart of "Rosebud." He is twenty-one years of age, the son of a wealthy Brazilian merchant; and being in England to complete his education, will return in three years time to his native clime, whether he wishes to take back with him some pretty English lady as his wife. "Don Pedro" is handsome, dark, a capital vocalist, a good performer on the mandolin, and feels assured he would make "Rosebud" a good husband.

PART XVII., FOR OCTOBER, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.
* * * * * Now Ready, VOL. II. OF THE LONDON READER. Price 4s. 6d.
Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. II. Price One Penny.

N.R.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER."
We cannot undertake to return rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. E. GILDER.